

Sampaio elected new Portuguese president

LISBON (AFP) — Jorge Sampaio, a socialist, won presidential elections in Portugal Sunday, defeating his rightist rival, former Prime Minister Anibal Cavaco Silva, radio and television said. Mr. Sampaio, a lawyer and two-term Lisbon mayor, had started the campaign well ahead in opinion polls, although his lead later slipped from 14 points to four. Buoyant Socialist Party officials had been privately predicting their candidate would trounce Cavaco Silva by up to 15 percentage points but no official figures were immediately available. Turnout by mid-morning was well down on previous polls, Portuguese media blaming dampened voter enthusiasm on the torrential rains and floods which have lashed the country over the past week, leaving 10 dead. Mr. Sampaio's victory, if confirmed by official results, would maintain political domination by the socialists, who ousted Cavaco Silva's Social Democratic Party (PSD) government last October (see earlier story on page 5).

Jordan Times

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Prince Hassan in Brussels

AMMAN (Petra) — Their Royal Highnesses Crown Prince Hassan, Princess Sarvath and Prince Abdullah bin Al Hussein Sunday arrived in Brussels at the start of a two-day visit, during which the Crown Prince will hold talks with senior European Union officials and Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) on relations between Jordan and the two bodies. Prince Hassan will also hold talks with the Belgian prime minister and senior Belgian officials on issues of common interest for both Jordan and Belgium. Prince Hassan was received upon arrival by senior Belgian Foreign Ministry officials, and members of the delegation accompanying Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabarti, in addition to the Jordanian ambassador in Belgium and senior embassy officials.

Majali arrives in Jericho

SOUTH SHOUNEH (Petra) — Senator and former Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday arrived in Jericho to join other observers of the Palestinian elections which will be held on Saturday, Jan. 20. Dr. Majali is accompanied by Senator Abdullah Salah.

'Red-Dead canal unrealistic'

CAIRO (AFP) — Long-held plans to build a canal linking the Red Sea and the Dead Sea are unfeasible, Israeli Energy Minister Gonen Seguev said in remarks published here Sunday. "The feasibility studies are negative and there are technical problems such as the higher level of the Red Sea compared with the Dead Sea," Mr. Seguev told the Arabic economic daily Al Alam Al Yom. The canal project, which has been discussed for several years, was to provide hydroelectric power. The plans were dusted off once more after Israel and Jordan signed a peace treaty in October 1994. Meanwhile, Mr. Seguev said Israel should not just depend on Egypt for oil supplies.

Sudan opposition chief arrested

CAIRO (AFP) — Sudanese security services have arrested a leader of the opposition Umma Party and taken him to an unknown destination, the party said Sunday. It said it had reliable information that Abdul Rahman Abdul Beshir, Umma chief in Kadugli in central Sudan, was arrested at the start of the year. "On Jan. 3 he was taken from home to an unknown destination and we have no further information on his fate," said the Umma statement issued in Cairo. Mr. Abdul Beshir is more than 80 years old and in ill health, it added, calling on human rights organisations to "exert all possible pressure on the Sudanese authorities to secure his release."

40 Egyptians in Israeli jails

CAIRO (AFP) — Forty Egyptians including a convicted spy are being held in Israeli jails, the government weekly Rose Al Youssef reported Sunday. Most of the prisoners are bedouin tribesmen who crossed the border to buy arms or drugs which are cheaper in Israel, the paper said quoting Egyptian foreign ministry sources. They were interrogated by Israel's internal security service Shin Bet before being sentenced to between five and 10 years in jail.

Syria accuses Israel of negotiating in bad faith

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — The Israel-Syria peace process looked in trouble Sunday with Damascus accusing the Jewish state of negotiating in bad faith. As U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher flew home Sunday declaring his latest shuttle mission between Tel Aviv and Damascus a big step towards peace, he left behind officials in both capitals openly expressing their disappointment at the lack of clear progress. "It is clear that Israeli leaders have no intention of implementing the principles of peace," Syrian state radio said in a scathing commentary which was in stark contrast with earlier optimistic remarks from the Syrian capital. Reiterating that Syria's key demand in the peace talks is a full withdrawal from the Golan Heights, the radio said: "Israel is hostile to real

peace... because it wants to keep (occupied) land and impose its hegemony over the region." It said Israel wanted Syrian President Hafez Assad to agree to a "warm" peace with economic ties and the opening of borders before committing itself to a full pull-out from the strategic plateau. Reiterating that there was no change in the Syrian position on the negotiations, the official daily Al Thawra said Israel should withdraw from the Golan to the pre-war June 4, 1967 borders. It said that security arrangements, which would be tackled by military experts, should be equal and balanced and should not harm the sovereignty of any party. It said Damascus will reject the continuation of the presence of "any symbol of occupation even over an atom of our soil."

The paper was apparently referring to previous Israeli demands for the set up of ground early warning posts in the Golan, an issue which caused the collapse of talks between the army chiefs of both states held in Washington last June. Al Thawra said the new round of talks should be more than exploratory negotiations. "The negotiations should enter a new stage that would exceed the exploration and understanding of the contents of the new political and media tone," Al Thawra said. "What is required now is a practical position which will lead to the tangible and essential progress," it said. "There is no doubt that the essential progress depends on the extent of Israeli seriousness and its readiness to commit itself to full withdrawal."

Israeli leaders consider early polls

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Israeli officials said Sunday that the meagre results of U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher's latest Israel-Syria peace shuttle had made early elections virtually inevitable. Mr. Christopher and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres sought to put a positive spin on the situation before the U.S. diplomat headed home Sunday after a shuttle mission between Jerusalem and Damascus aimed at trying to breathe new urgency into the peace negotiations. The official optimism was based on Syrian President Hafez Assad's agreement to hold another round of peace talks later and that military experts be included in the negotiating teams to tackle the toughest issue: Security arrangements to accompany an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights. But Israelis appeared more concerned with what was not achieved — an agreement to expand the talks further to draw up plans for future economic cooperation or any sign that Mr. Assad is willing to step up the pace of the peace process which has been

dragging on for more than four years. Israeli officials said unless concrete progress emerged in the talks when they resume Jan. 24 at Wye Plantation outside Washington, Israeli general elections scheduled for Oct. 29 will almost certainly be brought forward. "Peres is considering moving the elections up to June 4, but he won't announce anything until February," a close aide to the premier told AFP Sunday. The chances of reaching an agreement before (the October elections) are now zero," Deputy Foreign Minister Elie Dayan told journalists after Mr. Christopher briefed Mr. Peres on his Damascus talks. "We wanted to step up the pace of the talks with Damascus to reach an agreement in principle before October 29, but we apparently won't have any choice but to go to the ballot boxes earlier," he said. Syria meanwhile, on Sunday said it would not be pressured by the approach of Israel's general elections to accept a peace deal that did not meet its full demands. "We in Syria are not governed by the time factor, nor we will work under pressure

to rush after solutions which are mutilated or not well-cooked," Al Thawra newspaper said. "We want others to utilise the current chance to narrow the distance by committing themselves to full and total withdrawal from the Golan and South Lebanon," the official daily added. Mr. Peres' Labour Party is anxious to hold the elections before July, when many of the party's well-to-do supporters head abroad for summer holidays. Any decision to move up the polls — in which voters will choose a new parliament, or Knesset, and for the first time directly elect the prime minister — must be taken by mid-February to leave time to organise the balloting, officials said. Israeli commentators were virtually unanimous in taking a downbeat view of the state of the Syrian peace process following Mr. Christopher's Wednesday to Saturday shuttle. "Syrian President Hafez Assad's answers were disappointing," headlined the daily Davar, considered close to Mr. Peres' Labour Party.



His Majesty King Hussein Sunday confers with visiting Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok at the Royal Court (Photo by Yousef 'Allan)

Jordan, Holland sign land transport and investment protection agreements

AMMAN (Agencies) — Jordan and Holland on Sunday signed an agreement for cooperation in the field of land transport and exchanged letters of intent for the protection of investment in the two countries. The declaration was signed by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his Dutch counterpart Wim Kok at the conclusion of talks that were aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation in the era of Middle East peace-building, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

Petra said Holland showed willingness to contribute to the stability of peace and boost investment in the region in compatibility with the European policies that back peace and economic cooperation in the region. His Majesty King Hussein later on the day received Mr. Kok and decorated him with Al Nahda Medal, Petra said.

The talks are the result of Jordanian diplomacy that aims at building stronger relations with Europe in the context of the projected Jordan-Europe partnership agreement, currently being negotiated in Brussels, Petra said. Jordan and Holland will cooperate, in addition to land transport, in road and railway building.

The Dutch prime minister told reporters on arrival that during his two-day visit, he would hold talks with Sharif Zeid on bilateral relations, developments in the peace process and the EU role in peace-building. "Political peace is necessary for the future of the region," Mr. Kok said. "Jobs and prosperity should follow up a political peace." He said that countries in the region should concentrate on the economic and development in the region because "jobs, employ-

PNA, Israel clash over Jerusalem balloting

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AFP) — Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) are at odds over the type of boxes to be used for voting in East Jerusalem during the self-rule elections, poll organisers said Sunday. The Central Election Commission said the Palestinian side wants the boxes to be like the ones to be used on Jan. 20 around the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but Israel has refused.

Under the West Bank autonomy deal signed in September, a limited number of Palestinians in the annexed sector of Jerusalem are to vote at five post offices, using "envelopes" rather than ballot boxes. Israel, which claims the whole of Jerusalem as its capital, wants the balloting in Jerusalem to be restricted to a postal vote, and the receptacles are to be transferred out of the city for counting.

The Israeli police on Sunday cracked down on Palestinian candidates who are defying strict curbs on campaigning in the Holy City. An independent, Samir Jumaa Kereish, was detained while on his way into the city in a car plastered with posters, international observers said. In a similar showdown over election posters, Hanan Ashrawi, another independent, spent the whole day campaigning near a roadblock from the West Bank into the city after her two guards were arrested.

Ms. Ashrawi said border guards roughed her up after refusing to allow her car to cross for a rally because it was covered with posters, in defiance of the restrictions laid down by Israel ahead of the polls. "What she did was a violation of the special arrangements that we have concluded with the Palestinian Authority for East Jerusalem because she put some posters on her car," said General Oren Shahor, chief of Israeli military administration in the Palestinian territories. "Campaigning in the streets is forbidden in East Jerusalem," he said.

Arafat in Riyadh

DUBAI (R) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah on Sunday and discussed the Middle East peace process, Saudi television reported. Mr. Arafat, fresh from Middle East peace talks with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, also discussed Palestinian elections with the crown prince and Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal at the Yamama Palace in Riyadh.

The PLO chairman told reporters upon his arrival that the Palestinian election process was going smoothly, the television said. The television quoted Mr. Arafat as saying he had come to ask about King Fahd's health. King Fahd asked Crown Prince Abdullah on Jan. 1 to run the affairs of state while he recuperates from a stroke. The PLO chairman last visited the kingdom in October.

Saudi Arabia was once the PLO's main financial backer before the organisation's perceived sympathy for Iraq in the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis angered the Saudis. Mr. Arafat thanked King Fahd and Crown Prince Abdullah for their support of the Palestinian people and said the kingdom played an important role in backing the Palestinian authority. He also discussed his meeting on Saturday with Mr. Christopher with the crown prince.

Gen. Rajub said the raid and arrests were part of a crackdown on crime. Mr. Abu Hamid is running as an independent in Saturday's elections. Israeli troops withdrew from his village under a West Bank autonomy deal.

Afghani government strikes peace deal with opposing group

KABUL (AFP) — The beleaguered Afghan government has sealed a peace pact with one of its main rivals allowing the opening of a crucial road artery to the besieged capital Kabul, sources said Sunday.

The deal between Kabul and the opposition Shiite Muslim Hezbi-Wahdat faction could ease the pressure on the embattled capital which is suffering severe food and fuel shortages, the sources close to the Kabul administration told AFP.

"A deal between the two sides has already been signed and will have immediate effect," the sources said.

"It could mean the Kabul government will have access to already existing supply routes to the Hezbi-Wahdat in Bamyan province as well as to indigenous resources in the area," he said.

In the protocol signed in the past few days, the two sides agreed to cease hostilities immediately, to open the road between Kabul and north-central Bamyan province and to exchange prisoners, he said.

The accord between the former foes will almost certainly mean that Wahdat will pull out of Junbish, a northern alliance of opposition groups which has been battling the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani for the past two years, analysts said.

"It seems this apparent change of heart will again change the military alliance which has been signed," another source said.

"It could be enormously useful to the government which desperately needs to find ways of getting supplies into Kabul," he said.

An analyst here said sup-

plies could be channelled to Kabul from Bamyan, the base of pro-Iranian Wahdat leader Karim Khalili.

Government spokesmen however Sunday refused to comment on the possible development, which has been the subject of intense speculation here for days.

The deal appears to reverse years of bitter opposition and mistrust between the two camps, observers here said.

They fought bitter battles to control parts of Kabul just 10 months ago, and last clashed over the strategic Shibar pass on the Kabul-Bamyan road — which the protocol will reopen — in September.

The pass, on the border of the Wahdat stronghold of Bamyan and government-controlled Parwan province is one of the major supply

routes which could be used to bring food and fuel to Kabul.

It was blocked by the Wahdat about four months ago, aggravating a blockade on the three other main roads leading to the capital imposed by other warring factions.

The blockades on the city besieged on two sides by the Islamic Taliban movement have triggered a potential "humanitarian disaster" here as the winter drags on, aid agencies have warned.

The agreement between the government and Wahdat comes after the government offered to hold peace talks with all the warring factions in a bid to broker an end to years of civil war here.

The latest deal appears to be the first concrete sign of any thawing of ties between Kabul and the other groups.



PALESTINIAN ELECTION: An Israeli soldier looks at a fence full of Palestinian posters, the majority of them for Hanan Ashrawi, a human rights activist and candidate in the upcoming Palestinian elections. On Sunday, Ms. Ashrawi was prevented from entering occupied Jerusalem at the A-Ram checkpoint (see page 1 story) (Reuters photo)

Arab League seeks joint Iraqi-Syrian front on water

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League is trying to persuade Iraq and Syria to overcome their differences and form a joint front against Turkey's plans to divert water from the Euphrates river, a league official said Sunday.

The official, who asked not to be named, said the league was trying to organise a meeting between Iraqi and Syrian experts at its Cairo headquarters "to coordinate their positions regarding Turkey's measures which threaten to reduce the quantity of water flowing into the two countries."

Such a meeting would help the pan-Arab organisation to provide them with the necessary support, he added.

Baghdad and Damascus, which are ruled by rival branches of the Baath Party, broke off diplomatic relations at the

start of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war.

Turkey has angered both countries with its plans for a \$30-billion irrigation and hydroelectricity project involving the construction of 22 dams and 19 power plants along the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

Syria and Iraq complain that the projects will contaminate the river waters and lead to a drop in their level.

The Euphrates and Tigris rivers have their sources in Turkey. The Euphrates passes through Syria and merges with the Tigris in Iraq before reaching the Gulf.

Syria has demanded Turkey sign a formal agreement for the sharing of the Euphrates waters.

Turkey says it is ready to discuss with Syria and Iraq a "rational use of the waters" of the Euphrates.

Jews defend the mystical rabbi of the flying carpet

DAMANHUR, Egypt (AFP) — Thousands of Jews gathered in the north of Egypt to protect the tomb belonging to the "rabbi of the flying carpet" which a Muslim lawyer is trying to have pulled down.

Under a huge red tent, men and women sat around vast tables sagging under the weight of bread, meat and sweets which they had bought with them to share.

Hebrew could be heard, mixing with French and Arabic as Jews from Israel, Morocco and France praised the memory of Rabbi Yaacov Abu Hatira, who is believed to have miraculous powers even in death.

Thursday was the anniversary of his death. "On that day the rabbi comes down to earth to listen to our sufferings and our wishes and then goes back to the sky to intercede on our behalf with God," said Emile Ouaknin, a 50-year-old businessman.

Abu Hatira was a Cabbalist, a mystical branch of Judaism, born in 1808 in Tafilaite in the Moroccan Atlas. He was buried in Damanhur where he died in 1881.

"My sister-in-law, Brigitte, was childless for 10 years. I made her come here last year. Two months later she was pregnant and is now the mother of a baby girl," he said.

As the atmosphere grew thick with incense inside the mausoleum, and bodies pressed together, shouting, crying, desperate to touch the tomb, his followers wrote their wishes on scraps of paper and threw them at thousands of candles shining "like the rabbi's soul."

Others offered up almonds, dried fruits, bottles of alcohol, to be blessed so they could take them back to friends to allow them to share in the rabbi's powers.

Against the wall of the mausoleum the throats of a sheep and a calf were slit.

The rabbi's real name was Elbaz but he took the name Abu Hatira — father of the carpet. According to his followers, when the captain of a boat refused to take him to Palestine, he sat down on his carpet and flew to the promised land.

"Rubbish," scoffed lawyer Mustafa Raslan, who began a

suit Oct. 14 to have the tomb demolished or transferred to Israel.

"He was nothing but a poor Moroccan, living on a carpet under a bridge in Damanhur. When he died he was buried by a rich Jew from the town next to an Israeli cemetery. As the years went by they began to venerate him as a saint."

But the great grandson of the rabbi Jacques Abikissia, who heads a worldwide group set up in the "memory of Rabbi Yaacov," said "it would take several days to talk about all the miracles of his great grandfather."

"Those who attack Abu Hatira suffer much ill," added Mr. Ouaknin.

But lawyer Raslan brushed the threat aside. "It doesn't frighten me. It is exactly to fight against such superstitions that I have started this court case because even the Muslims near to the cemetery believe in these so-called miracles of Abu Hatira."

"So if a cow is not giving milk or a woman wants to stop her husband taking another wife, she turns to Abu Hatira."

Algerian journalist shot dead

PARIS (R) — Suspected Muslim guerrillas shot dead an Algerian journalist and wounded another outside the offices of a newspaper in central Algiers, colleagues and an official statement said Sunday.

At least three gunmen fired six bullets at the French-language L'Indepndnat's editor Noureddine Guitoune and researcher Khaled Aboulkacem on Saturday night as they walked home from the paper offices in Algiers, colleagues said.

Mr. Aboulkacem, 30, died in hospital from head wounds, they said by phone from the newspaper offices in Algiers. Mr. Guitoune, who celebrates his 47th birthday on Monday, was wounded in the abdomen but his injury was not life threatening, they added.

"The assailants were at least three and we heard them fire six bullets at them," a journalist said.

A security official statement, carried by the Algerian news agency APS, said the attack occurred at 9 p.m. (2000 GMT) near the newspaper headquarters at Larbi Ben M'hidi street in Algiers.

The attack against the two newspapermen came four days after gunmen pumped several bullets into the government-owned newspaper El Moudjahid's journalist Mohamed Mekati near his home in Ain Naadja suburb, southwest of Algiers. The 39-year-old journalist died of his injuries the following day.

No group has claimed responsibility for the latest assassinations but the Muslim fundamentalist Armed Islamic Group (GIA) has taken responsibility for the bulk of journalists' slaying in Algeria during the past two years.

More than 60 journalists and media employees have been killed in Algerian violence since June 1993 when rebels turned their guns against them, accusing the media of backing the government's propaganda campaign against the militants.

Up to 50,000 people have been killed in Algeria's civil strife pitting guerrillas against government forces since early 1992 when authorities cancelled a general election which the Islamists were set to win.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Shbellat pleads not guilty

AMMAN (AFP) — An Islamic union leader charged with slandering the King pleaded his innocence Sunday on the opening day of his trial before the State Security Court. "I am innocent and I am being tried for my opinions," Leith Shbellat, head of the Engineers Association told the court.

Mr. Shbellat, who opposes Jordan's peace treaty with Israel, is also charged with distributing information harmful to national unity and the economy. The union leader, who was arrested on Dec. 9, said his trial was aimed at "satisfying certain parties," whom he did not identify, adding his actions had been dictated by "national duty."

UAE wants to control Internet

DUBAI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) plans to develop a national strategy to control information coming into the country via the Internet, officials said Saturday. A conference entitled "Internet and Security" was held by Dubai police Saturday and recommended the creation of a commission to "develop a national strategy to prevent the bad use of the Internet." The UAE looked up to the Internet in August, joining the rapidly growing network that connects computers around the world and allows for a free exchange of text, images and sound. Participants in the meeting included senior officials from the ministries of interior, information and justice. They warned of "things on the Internet that were against Arab-Muslim values and decency, including pornography, and information dangerous to the country's economic, political and military security." The officials also underlined the need "to inform the Internet users of their rights and responsibilities, to protect the society's values and not expose the country's security to dangers such as crime, terrorism and drug trafficking." According to Walid Rashid, an official with the national telephone company Ettislat, "the number of Internet subscribers in the emirates is currently 3,000, and the requests to be connected continue to rise."

Snow storms in Iran kill 9

TEHRAN (AFP) — Nine people have died in violent snow and rain storms throughout Iran which also caused millions of dollars in damage, state television reported Sunday. Heavy snow and rain has hit 24 of Iran's 26 provinces in the past four days, including desert areas in southern and central regions of the country for the first time in 40 years. Thousands of hectares of farmland have been destroyed and 100,000 trees flattened in mainly southern regions of the country. The television said several boats had gone missing in the Gulf waters off Iran's southern ports, but did not report on the fate of the people on board. On Saturday, the official news agency IRNA said 17 fishermen had been found alive after going missing in a violent storm in the northern Gulf. Up to two metres of snow has accumulated in mountainous regions of the country. Rescue teams have been dispatched to disaster areas to provide help, the television said.

Vanunu appeals against prison conditions

BEERSHEBA (AFP) — Mordechai Vanunu, the Israeli nuclear technician jailed for revealing his country's atomic secrets to a British newspaper, appeared in court on Sunday to appeal against his prison conditions. The court postponed judgement on the appeal launched by Mr. Vanunu, who has been held in solitary confinement at Ashkelon prison in southern Israel for the past nine years, legal sources said. In 1986, Mr. Vanunu gave the British weekly the Sunday Times photographs he had taken during his work at the Dimona nuclear plant in the Negev desert. He was subsequently kidnapped by Israeli agents in Rome and taken to Israel for trial. Human rights organisations have protested ever since at the conditions in which he has been held. Israel has never officially admitted that it possesses nuclear weapons but foreign experts have said it has 200 warheads. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said his country would abandon "the atom" if it could conclude a comprehensive peace with countries in the Middle East including Iran, Libya and Iraq.

Syrians on Golan not eager for close ties with Israel

QUNEITRA, Syria (AFP) — Syrians living on the Golan Heights say they are not eager for the close economic and political ties sought by their Israeli neighbours on the disputed plateau.

"I could perhaps forget the past, but I would be lying if I told you that this could happen overnight," said Jamal Salem, an administrative official from the province of Quneitra.

A Syrian farmer who owned land now occupied by Israel on the Golan says he expects it will take years before Israel will enjoy the full economic and political cooperation it seeks in any peace deal with Syria.

"Here, we are very patient. Of course we support the peace process but in line with the U.N. resolutions (return of Golan). I refuse peace which will not give me back the Golan," he said.

The farmer, who did not want to give his name, said he lost his land and home

when Israel seized most of the Golan — 1,200 square kilometres — in the 1967 Middle East war.

"I had patiently removed all the stones to clear the ground, now Israeli settlers are occupying it. I still have the title deeds, and you just wait and see: One day I'll grow things on it better than before," he added.

About 13,000 Jewish settlers live on the Israeli side of the Golan, which is home to the plateau's best farming land and most of its water resources.

The settlers have prospered in agriculture and light industries, generating \$225 million a year in revenue. The Golan, which holds a strategic position over the northern part of the Jewish state, is also home to Israel's best wine-making region.

Many settlers have become so attached to the Golan that they have said they would consider living under Syrian rule to remain, and are hoping for an

overall peace, including joint economic development of the plateau.

But such ideas leave Syrians on the Golan cold, and like their government, they are more concerned about getting the plateau back.

"You don't think that the French and the Germans become friends in 1945 just like that," said Mr. Salem, referring to the end of World War II. "Don't ask Syrians to do overnight what it has taken others years to accomplish."

A young woman in Quneitra said she is more concerned about seeing her relatives on the Israeli side of the Golan, where more than 15,000 Syrian Druze continue to live.

"I want more than anything, if there is peace, to find my family," she said.

Quneitra, the "capital" of the Golan, became a ghost-town after Israeli troops used dynamite and bulldozers to demolish its buildings in 1974, shortly

before returning it to Syria as part of a U.S.-brokered ceasefire agreement.

The few people seen among the town's ruins are not optimistic about the resumption in December of Syrian-Israeli peace talks, which the United States brokered after a six-month stalemate.

On Saturday, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said he expected a peace accord to be signed in 1996 after talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad and Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

He also announced the negotiations would resume Jan. 24 and be expanded to include military experts.

Quneitra offers a lunar-like panorama, and all around the town three hills rise crowned by high-tech Israeli listening gear.

"We should keep part of these ruins as a museum," said a Syrian official as he looked at the devastation of Quneitra.

Near the last flattened house covered with moss, a Star of David flag flutters and a road sign reads: "Welcome to Israel."

During his peace mission to Israel and Syria this week, Mr. Christopher said that all the issues were now on the negotiating table and that the two sides could "see the trade-offs."

But people on the Golan fail to smile when asked if they could imagine the day when they could cross over into Israel to sell cabbage and buy Israeli goods.

The faces of some turn hard when asked to discuss the possibility that the Golan's key resources — water — could be shared between the two neighbouring countries once peace is achieved.

Israel draws about one-third of its water from the Golan.

"If there is peace, a just peace, I will not run and embrace them, nor would I hit them," said one young man.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00 Shelly Duval's Bedtime Stories

14:30 Richie Rich

15:00 Playhouse

15:15 Bustle Loose

15:40 Doc. — Animals of the Mediterranean

16:00 Voyagers

17:00 Children Programme — C'Est Pas Sorcier

17:30 Serie — Des Heros Ordinaires

18:00 News in French

18:15 Magazine — Nimbus

19:30 News Headlines

19:35 Moti's Navy

20:00 Inventions

20:25 Hawaii Five-O

21:10 Doc. — Russia — The Mission Years

22:00 News in English

22:25 Drama — Anna

23:10 Drama — Taurus Rising (Ep. II)

23:59 Comedy — Ellen

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr

06:32 Sunrise (Saar) Duha

11:48 Dhuhr

14:24 Asr

16:57 Maghrib

18:19 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetlith, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 63785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 634590

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757

Terramata Church Tel. 623566

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541

Anglican Church Tel. 652826

Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Armenian International Church Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 624328

German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Temperatures are expected to rise with skies partly cloudy and a chance for scattered showers.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Winds will be southeasterly moderate becoming southwesterly moderate in the evening.

In Agaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance for showers. Winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm during the day becoming southerly moderate to gale and seas rough in the evening.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 21/5

Agaba 9/21

Desert 0/16

Jordan Valley 8/20

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 13, Agaba 19. Humidity readings: Amman 52 per cent, Agaba 21 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Ghaleb Zawaideh 736011

Dr. Fakhri Balthasi 653412

Dr. Khalil Al Tawil 737253

Dr. Mahmoud 'Amir 888983

Fardous pharmacy 778336

Al Asama pharmacy 637055

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Al Salani pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 649495

Stimicani pharmacy 637660

Nairookh pharmacy 623672

Najib pharmacy 847632

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281741

Alquds pharmacy (—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Tareq Hijawi 985445

Khalil pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630361

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Shmiesani Hospital 843402

Traffic Police 896290

Public Security Department 630321

The Islamic, Abdali 66612757

Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7710103

Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 77511126

Army, Marfa 87161115

Queen Alia Hospital 686100

Amal Hospital 607135

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre 81381352

Khalidi Maternity, J. Ann 6442816

Akileh Maternity, J. Ann. 6424112

Jabal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmiesani 667071

Shmiesani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 658545

Al-Musader Hospital 6672279

The Islamic, Abdali 66612757

Al-Ahli, Abdali 6641646

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 7710103

Al-Bashir, J. Ashraf 77511126

Army, Marfa 87161115

Queen Alia Hospital 686100

Amal Hospital 607135

The Arab Centre for Heart and

Special Surgery 865199

Zalqa:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)999990

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775

Ibn Al Nafies Hospital (02)247100

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:20 Sesa (RJ)

09:40 Damascus (RJ)

09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

10:05 Beirut (RJ)

10:15 New Delhi (RJ)

10:15 Jeddah (RJ)

10:20 Cairo (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:25 Casablanca (RJ)

19:00 Bangkok (RJ)

19:50 Tunis (RJ)

23:50 New Delhi (add) (RJ)

01:30 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Kuala Lumpur, New Delhi (RJ) 04:50

Cairo (add) (RJ) 07:45

Jeddah (add) (RJ) 11:50

Khartoum (SE) 13:30

Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF) 15:50

Vicna (OS) 16:30

Kiev (GU) 06:40

London (BA) 02:30

Amsterdam (KL) 03:50

Beirut, London (BA) 06:50

Beirut (ME) 07:45

Khartoum (SE) 11:50

Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Muscat (GF) 15:50

Vicna (OS) 16:30

Kiev (GU) 06:40

London (BA) 02:30

Amsterdam (KL) 03:50

MARKET PRICES

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

04:20 New Delhi, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)

Jeddah (add) (RJ) 05:30

Beirut (RJ) 06:15

New Delhi (add) (RJ) 11:00

Tunis (RJ) 11:30

London (RJ) 12:05

Cairo (RJ) 12:15

Frankfurt (RJ) 12:25

Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ) 12:30

Bahrain, Doha (RJ) 20:15

Jeddah (add) (RJ) 20:20

Damascus (RJ) 20:30

Abu Dhabi (RJ) 21:00

Dubai, Muscat (RJ) 21:15

Cairo (add) (RJ) 01:30

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

05:00 Rome (AZ)

06:00 Istanbul (TK)

Uppercase price in fils per kg.

Apple 700/500

Banana 660/660

Banana (Mukammur) 600/600

Banana (imported) 860/700

Cabbage 80/50

Carrot 210/120

Cauliflower 120/50

Cucumbers (large) 100/50

Cucumbers (small) 220/150

Eggplant 180/120

Garlic 850/600

Grape Fruit 220/150

Lemon 300/200

Marrow (large) 80/50

Marrow (small) 130/70

Onion (green) 160/100

Onion (dry) 200/150

Orange 430/300

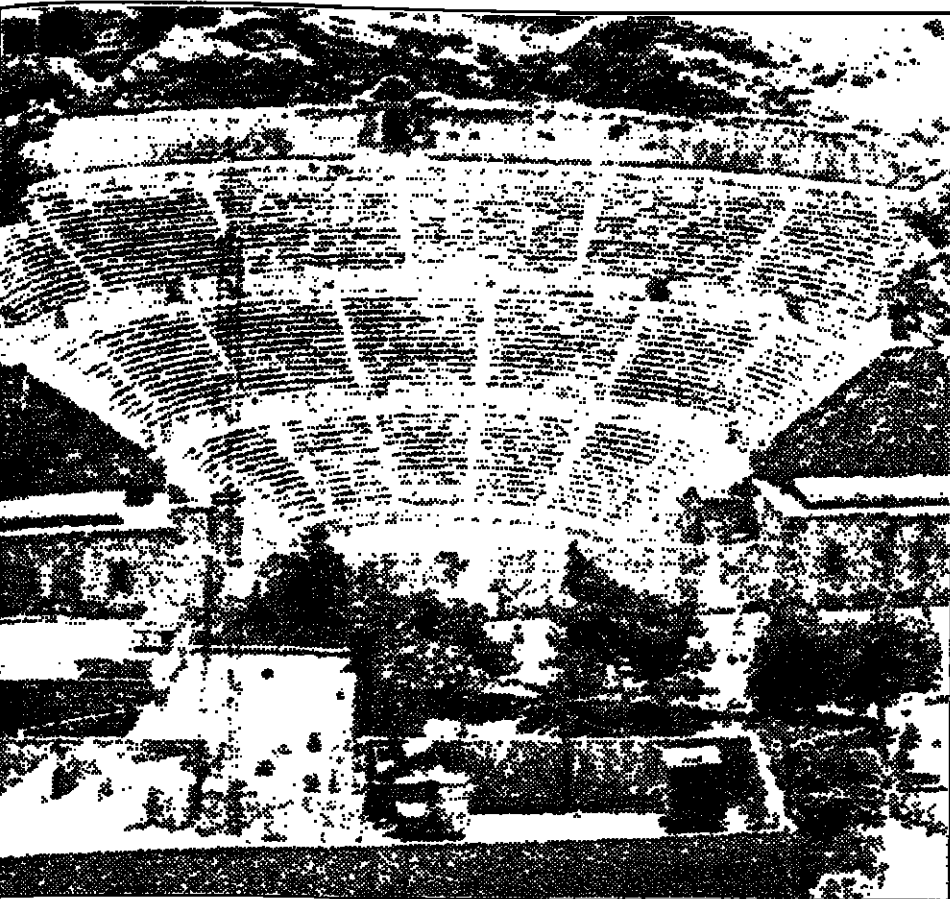
Potter (hot) 400/300

Pepper (sweet) 150/80

String Beans 500/400

Tomato 130/80

500 ل.س



A TOURISTS ATTRACTION: A plan prepared by a Japanese agency proposes the development of new facilities at the Amman amphitheatre (File photo)

Khatib thanks Japan for help in developing tourism sector

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Abdul Ilah Al Khatib said Sunday that Japan's continued assistance to Jordan to promote its tourism sector plays an important role in supporting peace and stability in the Middle East.

Addressing a workshop on the development of the tourism sector, the minister voiced the government's appreciation to Japan for its assistance, noting that a study and a plan on tourism in Jordan conducted by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will greatly boost the tourism industry in the Kingdom.

The workshop, held in cooperation with JICA and the Japanese embassy,

focused on the Japanese study, which the Japanese team has just concluded.

The Ministry of Tourism will revise the study, which contains plans and proposals for developing tourism before preparing a final report to the council of ministers and enforcing the plan, said Dr. Khatib.

Referring to the contents of the plan, the minister said that it provides for the implementation of six tourism-related projects.

Japan's Ambassador to Jordan Takayuki Kimura said in a statement that tourism in Jordan is one of the most important sectors which bring in hard currency to the Jordanian national economy.

The Japanese government has suggested that a number of vital projects be carried out in Jordan to boost tourism, said the minister, who added that Japan expressed readiness to provide the required financial and technical assistance for these projects.

During the one-day workshop, the participants watched a documentary film on Jordan's tourism and later reviewed ministry reports about the sharp increase in the number of tourists in the Kingdom.

The plan prepared by the Japanese calls on the public and private sectors to cooperate to develop tourism facilities in the heart of Amman, including the Citadel and the Roman Amphitheatre and the creation of a national museum in Ras Al Ain district and a hotel in Salt.

The ceremony in Zarqa, which will be held under Royal patronage, is expected to be attended by public and private institutions in the Zarqa and Mafrqa governorates, said the statement, which noted that invitations were also sent out to members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic missions in Amman.

The ministry said it prepared eight million saplings to be distributed to institutions and individuals around the country to be planted during this year.

It said that the trees will be planted in 40,000 to 50,000 dunums of land in addition to shrubs to be planted in 30,000 dunums of land in order to create pasture lands.

According to Musa Abbadi, director of the Ministry of Agriculture's Afforestation and Pasture Land Department, the total area of state-sponsored forests has now reached 730,000 dunums.

Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Al Faisal accompanied Queen Noor to the concert.



Sousa's "Stars and Stripes Forever". Dr. Ansbacher has conducted some of the most prominent orchestras in the world, such as the Vienna State Opera and the Cairo Symphony Orchestra. Recently, he conducted the Sarajevo Philharmonic Orchestra in Sarajevo's New Year's Eve Concert, which was broadcast worldwide. In recognition of his pioneering role in guiding American public and institutional policy in the arts, he became the first and only artist to be selected as a White House Fellow.

Her Royal Highness Princess Alia Al Faisal accompanied Queen Noor to the concert.

Queen attends concert

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Majesty Queen Noor Sunday attended a joint concert by the Orchestras of the National Music Conservatory (NMC) and the Jordanian Armed Forces, conducted by the renowned American musician Charles Ansbacher at the Philadelphia Hotel. The concert, which was held in cooperation with the Noor Al Hussein Foundation's NMC and the American Centre, featured works by George Bizet, Johannes Brahms, Johann Strauss, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Leonard Bernstein's "West Side Story" and John Philip



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Jordan, Israel to sign major new agreements Thursday Transportation deal to allow for transport of goods to self-rule areas

By Amy Henderson
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — By signing five new agreements Thursday, Jordan and Israel will have finalized all the deals that were stipulated by their 1994 peace treaty. The agreements, scientific and cultural exchange, transportation, telecommunications, maritime borders and Aqaba-Eilat, were approved by the cabinet Saturday.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan is expected to attend the signing ceremony in Aqaba. Signing for Jordan will be Minister of Transportation Samir Kawa, Minister of Post and Telecommunica-

tions Jamal Sarayrah, Lieutenant General Tahsin Shordom and Aqaba governor and president of the Aqaba Regional Authority Faysal Khasawneh. The scientific and cultural agreement will be signed by Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti.

Mr. Kabariti will sign the agreement along with his Israeli counterpart Ehud Barak, expected to arrive here Thursday.

The scientific and cultural agreement has been vehemently criticised by the opposition as the agreement that sanctions "normalisation" of relations between the two peoples. The controversy surrounding the

agreement has been the cause of much speculation and debate about who would sign it.

Although sources close to the government had earlier told the Jordan Times that Minister of Culture Samir Habashneh had asked "to be excused from his duties" in signing, a senior foreign ministry official Sunday said that this was "absolutely not the case." It was, he said, a matter of protocol.

"The cultural agreement falls under the jurisdiction of the foreign ministry in Israel," he said, "which means that the (Israeli) foreign minister would sign. Therefore, his Jordanian counterpart should also sign

the agreement."

According to the Israeli embassy in Amman, the Israeli foreign ministry deals with all international cultural agreements, which are the responsibility of the international cultural relations department within the foreign ministry.

Among the five agreements, the transportation agreement is considered to be one of the most important as it consolidates many of the eight cooperation agreements already signed, including a trade agreement and an agreement on tourism.

Provisions of the agreement would also permit the transport of goods to the

Palestinian self-rule areas. Under the agreement, Jordanian vehicles would cross the King Hussein Bridge and transfer goods to Palestinian vehicles destined for the self-rule areas.

Also under the transport agreement, scheduled to be effective one month following its signing, bus companies will run daily shuttles between seven major cities: the Israeli cities of Eilat, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Nazareth and the Jordanian cities of Amman, Aqaba and Irbid. It will also include a regular air taxi service between the two countries.

Its provisions also would allow private cars to cross the border into Israel.

Kingdom to mark Arbor Day

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan will today, Monday, celebrate Arbor Day with tree planting ceremonies to be held around the country.

A statement from the Ministry of Agriculture Sunday said that the main celebration will be held in the new Hashemite State University in Zarqa, noting that 4,000 fruit and forest trees will be planted in the university's campus.

The ceremony in Zarqa, which will be held under Royal patronage, is expected to be attended by public and private institutions in the Zarqa and Mafrqa governorates, said the statement, which noted that invitations were also sent out to members of the Arab and foreign diplomatic missions in Amman.

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Ministry urges local councils to promote cultural activities

AQABA (Petra) — Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Thuheirat Sunday urged mayors of towns in four governorates to give due attention to promoting cultural and youth activities in their regions, help protect the environment from pollution and green the country.

"The local administrations should not only aim at carrying out municipal services but must also create the opportune cultural, social and health environments that would brighten the life of the local residents," said the minister in opening a three-day seminar on the role of municipal councils in local development.

Mr. Thuheirat, who deputised for Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker at the meeting, said that his ministry has allocated JD 200,000 to create public libraries in the country's municipalities in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture to help promote cultural life.

"In keeping with the government's pledge before Parliament to help municipal councils, the ministry has purchased JD 1.5 million worth of equipment to be given to joint local councils," he said.

Through the Cities and Villages Development Bank (CVDB), the ministry supports and finances investment projects in rural and badia regions, said Mr. Thuheirat.

The 130 heads of local councils in Irbid, Ajloun, Jerash and Mafrqa who take part in the meetings are expected to review working papers dealing with ways to develop municipalities revenues, the role of cultural clubs in promoting local communities, the role of the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the CVDB in backing this development and the role of universities and the Jordan Valley Authority in helping local communities.

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TCC suspends service for 18,000 subscribers

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Telecommunications Corporation (TCC) has disconnected out-going service on 18,000 telephone lines for failure by subscribers to pay their TCC bills.

According to an official at the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications, which is responsible for TCC, the outstanding bill totalled about JD 4 million. Some of the bills were dated far back as last June 1995.

The disconnecting affected subscribers who had not paid their telephone bills from June to October 1995, said Yousef Hadidi, director of the Subscribers and Revenue Department at the ministry.

In the first phase service is cut only on the subscribers' out-going call, i.e., he/she can receive calls but not make calls. If a subscriber settles all outstanding bills during the first week he/she will not be fined the JD 5 reconnection charges.

Trial of sabotage suspects postponed

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The State Security Court Sunday postponed the trial of six defendants known as the "Islamic Revivalists" until Jan. 17 because two of five attorneys defending the group failed to show up in court.

The other three attorneys, Radi Gharaibeh, Khalid Aref and Mohammad Dweik, asked the tribunal Sunday to hear the witnesses even in the absence of the two attorneys.

On Jan. 7, Mr. Aref and Mr. Gharaibeh, representing defendants Saber Mokbel and Khalid Kilani, asked the court to call on two witnesses, Marzouq

weapons for illicit use, and belonging to an illegal organisation.

All six defendants last October pleaded innocent to the charges of sabotage and illegal possession and manufacturing of explosives. If convicted, they could receive the death penalty.

The group of six, which is alleged to have started gathering members in 1990, is charged with planning to carry out attacks against foreigners in Jordan, using explosives and automatic weapons. The group was apprehended before it actually carried out any attack.

They are also charged with illegal possession and manufacturing of explosive materials, automatic

weapons for illicit use, and belonging to an illegal organisation.

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Workshop on education for the gifted opens

AMMAN (Petra) — The Noor Al Hussein Foundation (NHF) and the regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Sunday opened a four-day regional workshop on the education for the gifted and talented students. The workshop is held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor and with the participation of nine Arab countries as well as the United Kingdom.

NHF Executive Director Ibrahim Badran opened the sessions by outlining the aims and objectives of the NHF-sponsored Jubilee School, which opened its

doors in 1993 providing advanced academic programmes to meet the intellectual, effective and creative needs of gifted students and to challenge them to achieve their full potential.

Dr. Badran said the Jubilee School follows two lines in education: one represented in the normal imparting of education to the students and the other enabling them to conduct research on their own to promote the scope of their knowledge.

Work is currently underway on the construction of the estimated \$15 million school, which is expected to be ready in 20 months, said Dr. Badran.

He said that the peace era in the Middle East places the region face to face with numerous challenges, foremost of which are the scientific, technological and economic challenges. Hence is the need for gifted people to deal with the new developments, he said.

The workshop, which was opened in the presence of His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, His Majesty King Hussein's cultural secretary, is expected to review 12 research papers dealing with educational programmes for the talented students, employment of modern technology in educating the gifted students, educational needs for schools caring for the gifted, educational strategies, guidance of talented children and experiences of the participating countries in this field.

Taking part in the regional workshop, which is held at the Royal Cultural Centre, are delegates from Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait and Iraq in addition to the United Kingdom and UNESCO.

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UNICEF IS A SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT



unicef
UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND
(UNICEF)
(AREA OFFICE)

UNICEF's Jordan Country Programme is seeking to recruit an accountant on short-term basis to assist in the financial and administrative follow-up of a survey conducted by the Department of Statistics with the assistance of inter alia UNICEF. S/he will undertake the following responsibilities:

1. Develop in close cooperation with the Department of Statistics a financial plan for the survey based on the survey's definition documents and timetable according to the project agreements, including amendments and budget.
2. Work in close collaboration with UNICEF's operations section and the Department of Statistics to develop and monitor a system for ensuring the smooth operation of all financial transactions in line with the financial rules and regulations of UNICEF.
3. Provide weekly and monthly written reports to UNICEF Area Office, Amman on all financial and administrative transactions related to the survey. Candidates should have the following qualifications:

1. BSc in Accounting with a minimum of 3 years of experience with a reputable, preferably international organisation.
2. Fluent written and spoken English and Arabic.
3. Computer literacy.
4. Good communication skills and ability to work in group and sometimes under pressure of time.
5. Background experience in social research activities a big asset.

DURATION: Starting as soon as possible for approximately 11 months. Salary depending on qualifications and experience.

Please send detailed resume, in English to:
**OPERATIONS OFFICER
UNICEF AREA OFFICE
P.O. BOX 811721, AMMAN 11181 JORDAN**

Applications for this position must be received by January 25th, 1996. Acknowledgement will only be sent to short-listed candidates under serious consideration.

UNICEF IS A SMOKE-FREE ENVIRONMENT

JEA, French company sign deal

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) has signed an agreement with Schneider Electric France providing for the establishment of an electric substation south of Amman. The \$15 million project, to be financed by the Jeddah-based Islamic Bank for Development, aims to establish a new 400/132kV substation to help in upgrading the voltage of the transmission overhead line between Aqaba and south Amman to 400 kilovolts. The project will be completed around the third quarter of 1997.

Railway project 'feasible'

AMMAN (Petra) — A study conducted by an Austrian company in cooperation with the Ministry of Transport concluded that a railway project linking Amman with the adjacent cities of Zarqa and Sweileh would be feasible, according to Director of Rail Transport at the Ministry Yahya Judeitawi. Mr. Judeitawi said the study, conducted through financing by the Austrian government, concluded that such a project would cost JD 51 million.

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURE

* "The Education We Desire" (in Arabic) by Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Education Abdul Ra'ouf Rawabdeh at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Contemporary and Traditional Jewellery at The Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141) (until Jan. 31).
* Water colours by Salim Kanaan at Riwaq Al Balqa Gallery, Fuheis (until Jan. 20).

Sri Lanka braces for fresh army offensive; Tigers step up attacks

COLOMBO (AFP) — Sri Lankan security forces poured more troops to the island's east ahead of a major showdown with Tamil Tigers guerrillas who have stepped up their attacks in the region, defence officials here said Sunday.

The separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) destroyed two more electricity transformers in the eastern town of Kalawanchikudy over the weekend, the military said in a statement.

Defence officials said more than 35 power transformers had been sabotaged by the LTTE in the region during the past month in an apparent bid to blunt the impending military offensive against their jungle bases.

Army commandos were moving to the coastal district of Batticaloa where the LTTE escalated attacks following the fall of their northern citadel of Jaffna last month, defence officials said.

In Jaffna itself, the LTTE Saturday shot dead a soldier, the military said. Although the army had driven out most of the rebels from Jaffna, there were a few guerrillas still holed up in the area, officials said.

There were also reports of an LTTE attack against a small islet in the north where a pro-government Tamil group maintains a small militia force. Military officials said they were awaiting details of Friday's attack on the Delft Islet.

There was no word from the LTTE about the attack but in a statement from its London office Saturday the Tigers said that the military was preparing for another round of fighting by acquiring more military hardware.

The LTTE said the navy was building another base in the island's north and importing aircraft and more hardware to escalate the ongoing conflict.

The navy was setting up a facility on the small islet of Mandativu to enforce a stranglehold on the rebels' former bastion of Jaffna in the north of the country, the LTTE charged.

"This is an attempt to form a steel ring around the coast of the Jaffna peninsula," the LTTE said in a statement issued from its London office and received here Saturday.

Officials said that with the fall of Jaffna, the LTTE had escalated its attacks in the eastern province where at least 50 people have been killed in fresh violence in the new year.

The LTTE lost its hold on Jaffna after 50 days of bitter fighting against government security forces earlier last month. Some 500 government soldiers and an estimated 2,000 rebels were killed in the fighting.

The Tigers accused the military of acquiring super-sonic planes, gunboats and armoured tanks.

"This clearly shows that the Sri Lankan government does not believe in finding a political solution to the national conflict," the LTTE said.

The government says it wants to neutralise the guerrillas, who ended a 100-day truce in April last year to resume their protracted campaign, before pressing ahead with a power-sharing package to resolve the drawn-out conflict.

More than 50,000 people have died in the separatist struggle in the past 23 years while all political attempts to appease minority Tamils have ended in failure.

Deputy Defence Minister Anuruddha Ratwatte told parliament last week that the army would soon move against the Tigers, this time in the eastern province from where the army had withdrawn troops for the Jaffna offensive.

Defence sources said the 10,000 recruits taken on two months ago will be absorbed into service by February giving the army more flexibility to hold territory taken from the Tigers while conducting new operations.

Canadian premier arrives in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien and a delegation of 150 business people and investors flew into Islamabad Sunday for a two-day visit aimed at boosting economic relations with Pakistan, officials said.

Mr. Chretien, who arrived from New Delhi on the second leg of his four-nation Asian tour, is the first Canadian prime minister to visit Pakistan since 1971. His trip will also take him to Indonesia and Malaysia.

His delegation, dubbed "Team Canada," includes representatives from both the private and public sectors. The Canadian business delegation is expected to sign nine agreements in the energy, transport and communication sectors, officials said.

Mr. Chretien, who was received by Foreign Minister Asef Ahmed Ali amid rain at Islamabad Airport, was expected to meet his Pakistani counterpart Benazir Bhutto late Sunday.

He will also call on President Farooq Ahmed Leghari.

Officials said the two prime ministers will discuss bilateral matters and regional and international issues

of mutual concern at a formal session Monday.

Ms. Bhutto will brief Mr. Chretien on the security situation in South Asia with special focus on Pakistan's Kashmir dispute with India and fears of a nuclear race on the subcontinent, they said.

Mr. Chretien, during his stay in India, called on New Delhi to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The civil war in neighbouring Afghanistan is also likely to figure in their talks. Coinciding with his trip, Canada announced Sunday a four million Canadian dollar (\$2.937 million) contribution in response to the United Nations appeal for humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan, U.N. sources here said.

The two prime ministers will attend a round-table meeting Monday which will consider recommendations of six working groups to promote investment in Pakistan, in the fields of energy, agro-based industry, telecommunications, transport, science and technology and education.

Mr. Chretien, 62, has launched a mission to reformulate foreign policy, giving precedence to Canadian

economic goals, Canadian High Commissioner Marie-Anne Beauchemin here said.

The visit by team Canada will offer a "great opportunity" to diversify bilateral relations, she said, adding that Canadian business people representing more than 140 companies are also expected to sign a number of commercial agreements with their Pakistani counterparts.

Most of the Canadian companies whose representatives arrived with Mr. Chretien are interested in hydro-power and thermal generation projects, she added.

A leading Canadian power generation company, B.C. Hydro, has started work on a 115 megawatt power project near Lahore in the Pakistani province of Punjab.

The Canadian investment in Pakistan has gone from zero to \$10 million in a year, she said, on the eve of Mr. Chretien's visit.

The volume of bilateral trade was worth \$260 million in 1994, she said, adding that in the last 12 months Canadian companies have concluded sales worth more than \$400 million.

Blair praises Thatcher; says she is locked in the past

LONDON (R) — Opposition Labour leader Tony Blair Sunday praised Margaret Thatcher for making a "big and gutsy" speech about the future of Britain's beleaguered government, but said she was locked in the past.

Mr. Blair, opinion poll favourite to be the next prime minister when a general election is called within 16 months, said he would boost education and help the jobless in the "stakeholder economy" he plans to power.

"The conservatives are in a state of disintegration," Mr. Blair said of Prime Minister John Major's Conservative government which has a wafer-thin majority and is bedevilled by internal divisions.

The splits in the ruling party were accentuated last week when Lady Thatcher, ousted in 1990 in a Conservative Party coup, urged Mr. Major to return to her right-wing agenda of the 1980's.

But Mr. Major bluntly rejected Lady Thatcher's appeal and repudiated her claim that the Conservatives were betraying the core middle-class supporters that have kept them in power since 1979.

The moderniser Blair, eager to woo those same voters and assure them "new Labour" is not a tax-raising party, said of Lady Thatcher's claim that "As you would expect from her, it was a big and gutsy speech."

But he said: "The real criticism is that she cannot see that the era of what the Tories (Conservatives) were doing in the eighties, now needs to move on. Creating a successful future is not about rerunning those arguments."

Mr. Blair has been accused by Conservatives of "trite sound-bite politics" with his call for a stakeholder economy. Critics accuse the Labour leader of pushing secondhand socialist principles wrapped in conservative ribbons.

Firebrand coalminers' trade union leader Arthur Scargill has become so disillusioned with Labour under Mr. Blair that on Saturday he set up his own breakaway political party.

Mr. Blair reviewed the defection of the miners' leader with equanimity and said Mr. Scargill's belief in "old-style state control" socialism did not match his views.



A Washington D.C. resident searches for her car as she walks along a line of snow-covered vehicles. The nation's capital got some relief as President Bill Clinton authorised federal emergency assistance to the city in the wake of one of the worst winter storms of the century (Reuters photo)

U.S. east coast welcomes thaw, as trash heaps mount in capital

WASHINGTON (AFP) — After a week of heavy snowfall, east coast residents fighting back with shovels and salt were aided by sunny skies and above-freezing temperatures that quickly turned city streets to slush.

Because of record snowfall from the "blizzard of '96," which first struck on Jan. 6, President Bill Clinton declared Saturday that "major disasters exist" in six states: Kentucky, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

That makes them eligible to receive federal aid to supplement state and local recovery efforts.

Throughout the region, curbside piles of garbage sat amid spreading puddles, some for a sixth consecutive day, as local officials scrambled to make up for missed trash pickups cancelled by a week of heavy snows.

Cash-strapped Washington, D.C. — heavily in debt from years of mismanagement and a fleeing tax base — appeared worst-equipped to mobilise plows and sanitation workers as snowdrifts grew progressively higher.

"In the District (of Columbia), we are on top of this snow," Washington Mayor Marion Barry told reporters Saturday. "We're going to have every street passable ... by Monday at the latest."

City officials expected to get 50 plows from the Federal National Park Service Sunday, bringing to about 150 the total number of plows clearing the streets of the capital.

But in a glaring reminder of the city's fiscal crisis, another 50 snow plows owned by the U.S. capital sat idle because the city was too broke to buy needed spare parts.

One small consolation to city hall, however, came in the form of whopping \$100 parking tickets — 2,500 issued by midweek to cars parked on streets designated as snow emergency routes, with the tally still rising Sunday.

Commuters noted a stark contrast between outlying Maryland and Virginia, where many side streets were repeatedly

cleared and salted, and Washington, where less than half of the city was ever plowed and even some major thoroughfares were buried under a half-metre of snow at week's end.

The more affluent suburbs planned to launch a major trash-collection effort Monday. Washington officials, meanwhile, said D.C. sanitation workers would not resume picking up garbage until Tuesday — at the earliest.

Many of the city's garbage collectors were pressed into service driving snowplows which are too large to pass through the back alleys that wind through many older neighbourhoods and house large trash dumpsters.

But if garbage piles grew while snowdrifts melted, sunshine and warm temperatures still came as a welcome relief after a week of bitter cold and heavy precipitation that cost 80 lives and billions of dollars of losses up and down the east coast.

Traffic accidents and heart attacks prompted by heavy snow-shovelling caused most fatalities. The death toll from federal and state sources was incomplete, but preliminary estimates placed the number in the 80s.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania got 81 centimetres (32 inches) in a single week, with cities up and down the eastern seaboard recording similar amounts.

Parts of West Virginia got up to 102 centimetres (40 inches) over the week, said Bob Oravec, spokesman for the National Centers for Environmental Prediction.

While the states looked to Washington for aid, the U.S. government itself was closed for four days, opening only Thursday. Federal offices were to reopen Tuesday after the U.S. budget impasse caused a record 21-day partial government shutdown. Monday is a national holiday.

Businesses, already reeling from sluggish holiday sales, were expected to be socked with billions of dollars in losses while insured property damage was expected to top \$1 billion.

Indonesia sees 'no early end' to hostage search

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesia's military Sunday revised down to nine the number of kidnappers freed by rebels in remote Irian Jaya but sees no early end to the search for European hostages.

Sources close to the search for 15 remaining captives, including seven Europeans, said authorities were not expecting any quick developments in the remote and rugged jungle where tribespeople who are still emerging from the stone age.

The British embassy in Jakarta Sunday confirmed three Scotland Yard detectives had travelled to remote Irian Jaya in connection with the kidnapping case.

Brigadier-General Suwarno Adiwijoyo said Sunday there were no new developments and the search, supervised by two senior generals, including special forces chief Brigadier-General Prabowo Subianto, was continuing.

Gen. Suwarno told Reuters authorities had corrected the number of people freed Friday. A group of 24 researchers and villagers had been kidnapped Monday by rebels from Mapunduma village, about 300 kilometres from the Papua New Guinea border.

The military has said rebels from the lightly-armed Free Papua Movement (OPM) were responsible for the kidnapping.

"The first information we

had said all 11 residents of Mapunduma village had been released, but later two others were unaccounted for," he said from home in Bandung, West Java.

"There were still 15 (kidnap victims)," he added. The Kompas newspaper said Sunday the released villagers were found by soldiers tied up in a village 3,000 metres above sea level after their captors had fled.

Military officials said Sunday they were found at Jiji, 40 kilometres east of Mapunduma.

The remaining kidnappers are scientific researchers and villagers living in the Lorentz Nature Reserve, about 4,000 kilometres east of Jakarta, which some environmental groups want to be granted a world heritage listing.

The captives include four Britons, all graduates of Cambridge University — Daniel Start, William Oates, Annette Van Der Kolk and Anna McIvor — and two World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) members German Frank Momberg and Mark Van Der Wal from the Netherlands.

Martha Klein, a Dutchwoman working with UNESCO (U.N. Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) in Jakarta, was also taken while visiting the village.

Indonesian researchers from the Jakarta Biological Sciences Club, Cenderawasih University in

Irian Jaya, Academy of Sciences (LIPI) and a conservation official as well as village church leaders are also among those still missing.

"The essential thing is to negotiate them out slowly with no resort to military methods," Graham Burton, Britain's ambassador to Indonesia, told Reuters in Jakarta Saturday.

British embassy spokesman John Virgoe Sunday confirmed reports that three Scotland Yard detectives were in Jayapura, the Irian capital, but he could not say what role they had.

"I can confirm that is the case. I can't discuss operational details," he told Reuters.

The British mission already has its defence attaché Colonel Ivar Hallberg in Wamena, the nearest town to the kidnapping site in the scenic Baliem Valley, and another official in Jayapura. Jakarta-based Dutch and German diplomats are also in Irian.

The OPM has since 1963 been seeking independence for Irian Jaya province, an area larger than California but with one-third of the population. It was previously a Dutch colony.

The OPM's overseas representatives said the kidnappings were planned to highlight the rebel cause, but they did not know the kidnappers' ransom demands.

Topless Diana film on offer

LONDON (R) — A British tabloid said Sunday that video film of Princess Diana sunbathing topless was being offered for sale to television stations. The People newspaper said the two-minute film showed Princess Diana beside a swimming-pool in a white bathing costume rolled down to her waist. The video is thought to have been shot in the West Indies, it said. The estranged wife of heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles went for a post-Christmas break on the Caribbean island of Barbuda. One television executive quoted by the People said Princess Diana "looked terrific. She is not flaunting herself and is obviously unaware that the peeping tom is at work but she does show off a pretty stunning figure". "Diana comes into the picture slipping the costume back over her shoulders," he is quoted as saying.

Tennis ace denies affair with duchess

MELBOURNE (R) — The coach of Austrian tennis ace Thomas Muster Sunday dismissed talk that the world number three and Britain's Duchess of York were romantically linked.

Ronald Leight, speaking on the eve of the Australian Open at Melbourne's Flinders Park, denied a front-page Australian newspaper report that the duchess pursued his protegee across the country last week after meeting Muster at an event in Qatar.

The Sunday Telegraph said Sunday that the duchess, who is separated from her husband Prince Andrew, shared a flight with Muster from the Middle East to Australia, where she visited her pregnant sister, Jane Luckede, in Sydney last Tuesday. But the duchess flew on to Melbourne to see Muster and stayed at his hotel for a night, the newspaper reported in an uncorroborated headline.

Fergie's New Love Match. Asked if Muster was romantically linked with the duchess, Leight said: "I think the most romantic thing for Thomas right now is the Australian Open and the chance to be number one." Leight confirmed that Muster had met the duchess in Qatar, shared some beers with her — "not champagne as the newspapers said" — and coincidentally was on the same flight to Sydney. "By chance she was on the same plane to visit her sister in Sydney and that's it," Leight said. "She's a very nice lady and she likes tennis a lot and that's it."

Muster was concerned at the publicity on the eve of this year's first Grand Slam tournament, one of the most important events for rankings, and wanted to "keep the attention low", Leight said. "He really wants to concentrate on the tournament," he said.

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Court blocks U.S. buffalo hunt

SANTA FE, N.M. (R) — A judge has blocked a controversial buffalo hunt planned on a U.S. military base this weekend following protests by local American Indians and animal rights activists. Judge Martha Vasquez issued a 10-day injunction halting the hunt and will hold a hearing later this month to consider claims the U.S. army should have conducted an environmental impact study before allowing the hunt. Nine hunters had been selected by lottery to kill nine bulls in the state's official herd of 60 buffalos. The bison graze at Fort Wingate, a 10,000-acre (4,050-hectare) installation near the city of Gallup in western New Mexico. The last public buffalo hunt in New Mexico was held in 1884. By the turn of the century 500 buffalo were left. About 100,000 bison now live in North America.



Hostages held by rebel Chechen separatists in the village of Pervomayskaya rest. The Chechen fighters holding more than 100 hostages opened fresh talks with officials from the Russian region of Dagestan, but there was no sign of an end to the chilly stand-off (Reuters photo)

North Korean diplomat's wife expected to take refuge in Seoul

SEOUL (AFP) — Zambia is likely to send the wife of a North Korean diplomat to South Korea, despite strong protests by the North Korean mission there that her defection was a kidnapping, reports said Sunday. "She could arrive in Seoul soon after she gets clearance from the Zambian government," an unnamed Foreign Ministry official in Seoul told Yonhap News Agency. Choi Soo-Bong, wife of a North Korean third secretary who sought asylum in the South Korean embassy in Lusaka last week, has been handed over to the Zambian authorities until a decision is made, apparently to ensure her safety. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees has been asked to intervene and confirm her desire to go to Seoul after allegations by North Korea that she had been kidnapped, officials said. Ms. Choi, 36, could be the daughter-in-law of Hyon-Chol-Kyu, a senior North Korean Communist Party official in charge of South Hamkyong province, Yonhap said. "The exact identities (of Choi and her husband) cannot be made public at this stage for security reasons," an official told Yonhap. The Foreign Ministry held an urgent meeting Sunday over the case, a ministry official told AFP, declining to comment further. Ms. Choi's husband, identified as Hyong

Song-Il, might be in custody in his embassy compound, sparking speculation that the couple had conspired to defect to Seoul. South Korean newspapers said. South Korean officials said Ms. Choi had cited ideological disillusionment and other political reasons in asking for asylum. But China's official Xinhua News Agency quoted a North Korean diplomat as saying that she had been forced to defect. "They are holding her and have forced her to say she has defected," Councillor Cho Yong-Man was quoted as saying. The councillor described the case as "very serious and contrary to international and Zambian laws," demanding Ms. Choi be allowed to meet and talk with her husband, Xinhua said. The North's strong action was a proof of growing jitters in Pyongyang over a series of defections by government officials to South Korea, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper said. A North Korean diplomat in Zaire defected to South Korea in 1991, followed by dozens of North Korean students, officials and workers overseas in the past four years. North Korea maintains a strong embassy in Zambia, although its presence there has been shaded by growing economic ties between South Korea and the African nation since their diplomatic normalisation in 1990.

S.Korea's Chun blamed for Kwangju massacre

SEOUL (R) — After charging former President Chun Doo Hwan with mutiny and corruption, South Korean prosecutors are pinning the blame on him for the most traumatic event in the country's recent past, the 1980 Kwangju massacre.

Mr. Chun is widely believed to have ordered an army assault on the city that rose up in revolt against a military junta he led. Media reports Sunday said state prosecutors are now officially saying he issued the order.

They quoted an unnamed prosecutor as saying that the order to "despatch Special Warfare Command troops to crush the rebellion came from Mr. Chun in collaboration with former President Roh Tae-Woo, who at that time was capital garrison commander, and then Special Warfare Unit commander, Chung Ho-Yong. Mr. Chun had masterminded a coup in 1979 that propelled him and Mr. Roh to office. Around 200 pro-democracy activists were killed by official count when paratroopers trained for combat with North Korea stormed the city armed with rifles and bayonets. Residents say more than a thousand may have died.

In late December prosecutors visited Kwangju to try to piece together the sequence of bloody events. They are preparing to excavate several sites believed to hold unmarked graves of young demonstrators.

Mr. Chun was indicted on Dec. 21 for mutiny and Mr. Roh was charged at the same time with abetting him. Separately, Mr. Chun was charged last Friday with taking 215.95 billion won (\$273.35 million) in bribes from business leaders while in office from 1980-88.

Mr. Roh is on trial along with heads of seven business conglomerates accused of giving him 284 billion won (\$359 million) in kickbacks during his 1988-93 term.

Both face execution if convicted, although it is widely believed they will escape with long jail terms.

Backing their allegations against Mr. Chun, prosecutors have secured testimony from former senior military leaders, including martial law Commander Lee Hui-Sung, the media reports say. General Lee was quoted telling prosecutors that military commanders in the regular command chain received almost no reports on military operations in Kwangju, which was under the control of the Defence Security Command.

Chechen gunmen defy Russian hostage deadline

OUTSIDE PERVOMAIS-KOYE, Russia (R) — Chechen gunmen defied a Russian ultimatum to free dozens of hostages Sunday and hopes of averting a bloody showdown to the five-day-old crisis were fading fast. The State Security Service extended a 10 a.m. (0700 GMT) deadline to try to avert bloodshed after the guerrillas failed to free at least 70 captives they are holding in the snowy southern Russian village of Pervomaiskoye.

An Interior Ministry official told Reuters the new deadline was for 1 p.m. (1000 GMT), but that also passed without any sign of a breakthrough. Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov and Federal Security Service Director Mikhail Barsukov, allies of President Boris Yeltsin, arrived in Makhachkala, capital of Dagestan, to take charge of the operation near the region's border with Chechnya.

"This decision arose from a request by Dagestan's leadership...and a wish to keep possible casualties to a minimum when the hostages are freed," ITAR-TASS news agency quoted operational headquarters as saying.

Reporters restricted to about three kilometres from Pervomaiskoye saw no hostages released. But they also saw no immediate sign of Russian using force to end the crisis and said its ring of armour around the village had been loosened.

Rebel leader Salman Raduyev rejected the deadline and said he would fight to the end, Interfax News Agency said, quoting talks by radio with Dagestan leaders. "Salman Raduyev...is prepared to fight to the finish," it said. Several buses of troops,

armoured vehicles and armoured personnel carriers pulled back as far as Sovetskoye, a village about three kilometres from Pervomaiskoye.

But helicopters clattered regularly overhead and Russian officials indicated they were ready to pounce if the gunmen carried out threats to start shooting hostages if their demands for safe passage to their homeland were not met.

Two helicopters landed near the village before noon, sending a pall of smoke into the air. Officials said this could have been caused deliberately by a smokescreen.

Mr. Barsukov said Saturday that if the rebels released their hostages and gave up their weapons they would be allowed to return to their mountainous north Caucasus homeland, which is waging a war of independence against Moscow. He did not say what action troops would take if Commander Raduyev ignored the ultimatum.

"Every minute and hour counts now," TASS quoted Mr. Barsukov as saying Saturday. "We are doing everything possible to free the hostages by peaceful means. If they harm so much as a single hostage they will not escape punishment."

Mr. Barsukov said Mr. Yeltsin, for whom the hostages' deaths would be a disaster in the run-up to June's presidential election, had the situation "under his complete control and is showing the highest concern."

Mr. Yeltsin has said he will do all he can to save the hostages. He cannot afford to give in to the gunmen in the second incidence of hostage-taking outside Chechnya in seven months.



A relative of one of the hostages, taken by a group of Chechen fighters, prays in the snow in front of a Russian military check-point near the village of Pervomaiskaya (Reuters photo)

That would leave him exposed to criticism when the Russian parliament's lower house begins a new session Tuesday.

The rebels want Moscow politicians, foreign journalists and aid workers to travel with them to Chechnya as a safety guarantee and want talks with top Russian officials. They have been holding the hostages in houses in the village.

They arrived in the Dagestani town of Kizlyar Tuesday, herded about 2,000 people into a hospital killing more than 20, but left for Chechnya the next day with some of the hostages. They were

stopped just short of the border at Pervomaiskoye.

A crowd gathered at Kizlyar's local government offices Sunday to protest that talks to free the hostages were taking so long, TASS said. "You can feel alarm in the air," it said.

People in Dagestan have been terrified by unconfirmed reports that rebel Chechen reinforcements are gathering along the border with Chechnya.

Mr. Yeltsin ordered troops into Chechnya in December 1994 to crush the region's independence drive. The crisis has helped shift the balance of political forces in Russia.

Socialist tipped to win Portugal presidential race

LISBON (AFP) — Portuguese voters Sunday began choosing a successor to outgoing veteran President Mario Soares, with fellow Socialist Jorge Sampaio tipped to beat his centre-right rival Anibal Cavaco Silva.

Election Commission officials played down confusion over the ballot paper for the vote, which featured the names of two left-wing candidates who had pulled out of the race to clear the way for Mr. Sampaio.

Communist Jeronimo De Sousa and far-left candidate Alberto Matos withdrew from the race last week but their names remained on the election's single ballot paper, sparking worried telephone calls to the commission from many polling station officials when polls opened at 8:00 a.m. (0700 GMT).

A win for Mr. Sampaio, a lawyer and former mayor of the capital Lisbon, would maintain political domination by the Socialists, who ousted Mr. Cavaco Silva's Social-Democratic Party (PSD) government last October.

Opinion polls put Mr. Sampaio ahead, although his lead dropped during the campaign from 14 points to four. Mr. Cavaco Silva, 57 this year, like his rival, however failed to win the backing of Portugal's third-largest party, the right-wing Nationalist Popular Party of Antonio Monteiro, which refused to advise its followers which way to vote.

But the ex-prime minister was supported by Mr. Soares' predecessor as president, General Ramalho Eanes, who governed for ten years from 1976.

Meanwhile bad weather disrupted Sunday's ballot in a number of areas while environmental and other protests led to boycotts of the poll in eight small districts.

In central western district of Cezaredas locals prevented the polling station from opening to protest the designation of their commune as an ecological area, which placed a ban on new building permits.

In Vilar De Basteiros, in the north, a gang attacked the polling station chairman, stealing electoral lists, ballot

papers and the ballot box in a protest over a local open-air sewage treatment plant.

In the southern district of Reguengo Do Alviela, voters were ferried to the polling station in rubber dinghies after the river.

Tage burst its banks after a week of torrential rain which have lashed Portugal.

Forecasters predicted improved weather later in the day, which observers said would encourage Portugal's 8.7 million electors to vote.

The towering figure of Mr. Mario Soares heavily overshadowed both would-be successors. His charismatic personality has dominated Portuguese politics both at home and abroad since the end of right-wing dictatorship and the restoration of democracy in Portugal in 1974.

Mr. Soares, popularly known as "the king," could not stand again after serving two consecutive terms as president and now plans to retire from politics. He is to quit the presidential Belem Palace on March 8.

During a lively, American-style campaign played out in the media, Mr. Sampaio, whose slogan is "one for all, all for Portugal," kept stressing that he wants to unite the Portuguese people.

Surrounded by an impressive entourage of politicians, intellectuals and businessmen of varied shades of opinion, he hammered away constantly at the theme of tolerance.

Mr. Cavaco Silva, three times prime minister, meanwhile tried to raise the temperature by warning that Mr. Sampaio would form a left-wing front if he gets into power because he allegedly has to pay off the Communists for their support.

Mr. Sampaio has benefited from the honeymoon the new Socialist government has been enjoying with the voters, and Mr. Cavaco Silva's decision to wait until October before throwing himself into the presidential contest.

Burma shrugs off U.S. demand to extradite Khun Sa

BANGKOK (R) — A Burmese official and close aides to opium kingpin Khun Sa Sunday shrugged off United States demands that Burma extradite the drug lord to the U.S. where he is wanted on heroin trafficking charges.

A senior Burmese official insisted that the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) would not hand over Khun Sa, who was indicted by a U.S. court in December 1989 on various charges of drugs trafficking. Khun Sa denies the charges.

"That all the Americans do, they talk and talk. But if they are serious why didn't they assist us in the first place...These people never appreciate what we are doing. They always say nonsense about the SLORC and now they want this guy back so let them talk. When

they get tired they will stop," one Burmese official told Reuters in reference to a U.S. demand to extradite Khun Sa.

"We will deal with the guy by ourselves. We are not going to send him to the United States."

Winston Lord, U.S. assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, Saturday urged Burmese authorities to hand the drug lord over to the United States to face trial.

Khun Sa officially surrendered along with his Mong Tai Army (MTA) to the Burmese government at a ceremony at his jungle headquarters on Jan. 7 amid widespread speculation that he agreed to give up his guerrilla war in exchange for some form of amnesty.

"We would urge the SLORC...to not only convict, or detain Khun Sa, but in fact to extradite him to

the U.S.," Mr. Lord told a news conference in Bangkok.

"If the SLORC has made a deal...this would be extremely serious...a defeat for the control of drugs in all our countries," he said. "The entire international community would be distressed if one of the world's leading drug traffickers...were to be let free," he said.

The Burmese official shrugged off Mr. Lord's remarks.

"Myanmar (Burma) is a sovereign country," he said when asked why the SLORC would not cooperate with the U.S. and extradite Khun Sa.

A close aide of Khun Sa's said his boss was still living in his Ho Mong headquarters under heavy protection of Burmese troops.

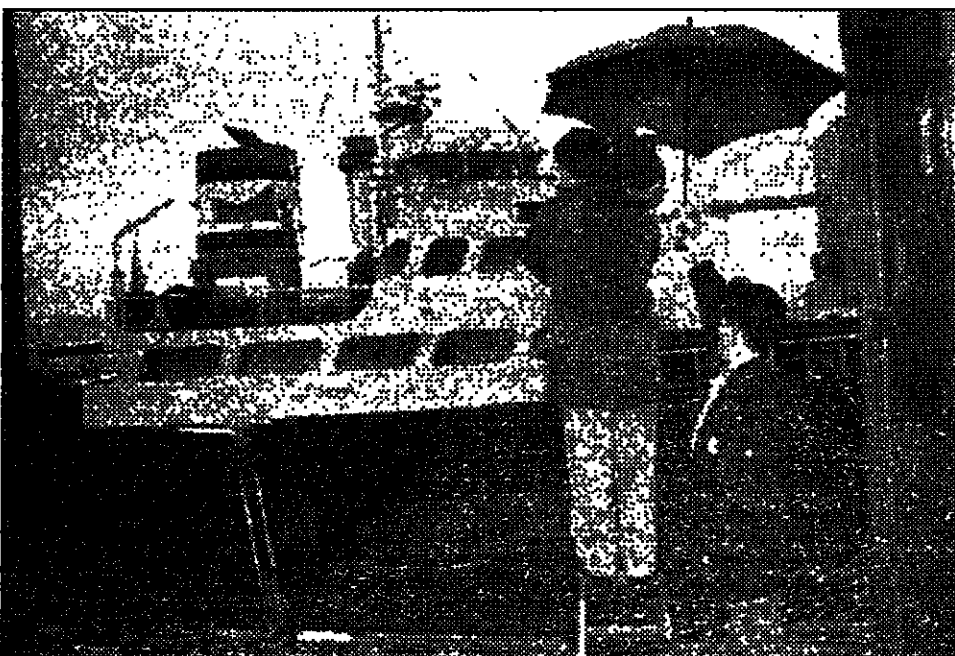
"Not sending him to face trial in United States is one crucial point among the 10-

point agreement," an MTA officer told Reuters in a telephone interview.

Anti-narcotics officials estimate Khun Sa was responsible for about half of Burma's annual opium crop of more than 2,000 tonnes and U.S. officials say around 60 per cent of the heroin on U.S. city streets comes from Burma.

The MTA official said Khun Sa and about 8,000 of his civilians followers are being treated well by SLORC officials at the Ho Mong jungle town on the edge of Shan state, about 30 kilometres from the Thai border.

"The SLORC officials have issued Burmese identity cards to the people who used to live under control of MTA. Everyone is legal now, so they can travel anywhere in Burma," the officer said.



South Korean journalists record the departure of the Chinese ship Yanlong IV, heading for Communist North Korea and bearing the first shipment of equipment for use in the construction of light water nuclear reactors in the port of Pusan (Reuters photo)

Seoul nuclear gear shipped to N. Korea

PUSAN, South Korea (R) — The first shipment of equipment for use in construction of two light-water nuclear reactors in North Korea left the South Korean port of Pusan Sunday.

The equipment is part of a \$4.5 billion deal signed in Geneva in 1994 between Pyongyang and an international consortium under which North Korea agreed to scrap its graphite reactors capable of making bomb-grade equipment.

At the time, the deal was seen as a breakthrough in neutralising Pyongyang's suspected nuclear weapons programme. But since then Pyongyang has been jangling nerves by showing off its conventional military prowess with large-scale manoeuvres near the border with the South involving warplanes and troops of the world's fifth largest army.

And the consortium of South Korea, Japan and the United States is reported to be running into funding problems amid debate over what role the European Union (EU) should play.

Large drilling machines, a mud pump and other equipment needed for a geological survey were loaded into containers on board a Chinese-flagged ship, Yanlong IV.

The 1,042-tonne vessel was expected to arrive in a North Korean port, identified by the Yonhap News Agency as Rajin, around Jan. 16.

The machinery would be transported to Shupho on the northeastern coast of North Korea, the site chosen for the two power plants that will be largely South Korean built, designed and financed.

A 20-member geological survey team from the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organisation (KEDO) — the formal name of the consortium that is overseeing the project — left Seoul Sunday for Shupho.

It will travel via Beijing and is expected to arrive on Jan. 17. The delegation of 18 South Koreans, an American and a Japanese would conduct geological and seismic surveys for a month in the Shupho area.

Meanwhile, KEDO officials were meeting in Seoul to discuss financial arrangements. U.S. Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Hubbard arrived in Seoul Saturday for meetings with his South Korean and Japanese counterparts.

The Korea Times reported Sunday that the U.S. had difficulties meeting its obligations under the Geneva accord to supply North Korea with heavy oil to ease its energy shortage before the light water reactors are built.

It quoted unnamed Seoul officials as saying Washington had not officially asked South Korea for help, but any request was likely to be resisted since Seoul is bearing the lion's share of costs for the reactors.

The question of what role the EU should play in the consortium is closely linked to the sum of money it is ready to offer, according to European officials.

The EU is keen to play a more active political role in North Asia to match its economic interests. Seoul officials are uneasy at the EU joining the consortium's three-member executive committee.

Jordan Times

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Hard work ahead

NO ONE can belittle the significance of the recent measures the government has taken to revitalise the economy. The legislative reform package that was endorsed by Parliament late last year came to consolidate the positive image that the kingdom projected during the October middle east and north Africa economic summit. With a suitable legal environment and an abundance of opportunities for feasible investment, the country can expect many a foreign investor to come to explore the possibilities for doing business in Jordan. Is it time to harvest? Not quite. Much hard work remains to be done.

Bureaucratic measures and red tape are still strong hurdles that could discourage people with money to commit in the market. The processing of applications is still unnecessarily lengthy and cumbersome. The government has to address this problem and immediately so for the remedy would entail more than just the introduction of modern and smooth rules and regulations and it will be long before positive results start to appear.

The government needs to work hard on changing the mentality and attitudes of its bureaucrats. It needs to educate them on the new laws of the land and on how to apply them. But more importantly, it needs to encourage them to develop new attitudes towards people who visit their offices to get their paperwork done.

It is no secret that complaints about the inefficiency of the bureaucracy abound. And it is no secret that complaints are justified. But this inefficiency could be tolerated in the past because the role of the private sector was not so instrumental in the economy. Now the government is expecting, and urging, the private sector to take the lead in the economic development process. And it will, providing that the government and its employees facilitate, rather than complicate, its work. Assured of profit, political stability and legal protection, the only other guarantee that businesses would want is an efficient, bureaucracy that is willing to cooperate with them and facilitate their work. Having worked hard to ensure all the other requirements of the private sector, the government should start reforming its own organs through launching educational and training programmes that would render its employees capable of dealing with the spirit of the new times.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily discussed the coming Palestinian elections, criticising Israel's attitude towards the polls and calling for an end of its interference in Palestinian affairs. Several countries have already sent or will send observers to monitor the elections, but they had to secure Israel's approval first before sending the observers although the elections are not taking place on Israeli soil, said Mahmoud Rimawi. We had assumed that the Palestinian elections came about as a fruit of the peace process and that the Palestinians will vote in a free and fair atmosphere, said the writer. Although the Palestinians welcome the presence of observers, they do not wish to see Israel controlling the process of accepting what countries they choose to allow into the Palestinian lands, he said. The whole peace process and the elections will become meaningless unless the Palestinians enjoy the right to vote freely, without Israeli influences or interference, said the writer, who demanded that the monitoring of the coming elections next week be left to the international community at large and, if necessary to the United Nations.

A WRITER in Al Dustour came up with an analysis for the failure of the political parties weeklies, which have failed to attract readers. Mohammad Daoud said that not only the financial resources are important in the press but also are the professional skills, which most of these weeklies lack. It is well known that the backbone of any publication, whether weekly or daily, is advertisements, and it should be noted also that advertisers prefer daily rather than weekly newspapers whether the weeklies were affiliated to political parties or independent, said the writer. The advertisements normally constitute 75 per cent of the revenues of a newspaper and the political weeklies lack such a resource, continued the writer. In addition, he said, the political parties have failed to employ professional journalists to write their publications, and preferred to employ party members or party supporters for the job, thus making their weeklies look like political party leaflets. He said before issuing any publication, the political parties ought to conduct a real survey and a feasibility study that should take into consideration the necessary elements for a successful publication.

New Germany ready to flex its muscles

The settlement of the conflict in the Balkans has signalled Bonn's reemergence as an active player on the world stage, writes Louis Delattre

THE SCENE took place in Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995. In a corridor of the Hope Hotel, the Serbian president, Slobodan Milosevic, bumped into Wolfgang Ischinger, a senior official in the German foreign ministry and Bonn's chief negotiator in the Contact Group on the former Yugoslavia. The handshake that ensued was the first for four years between a Serb leader and an official representative of Germany.

Mr. Milosevic told Mr. Ischinger: "Richard Holbrooke is the most important person in Dayton. But the second most important is you." Who could ever have imagined that Belgrade would one day pay a tribute of that kind to Bonn?

The story shows that five years after reunification Germany has once again become a leading player on the international stage. Never had it participated in world affairs as actively it did in 1995.

The decision by the German government to send 4,000 troops of the Bundeswehr to join NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) in the former Yugoslavia may not have been the key event in the process of restoring peace in the Balkans. But it was felt by German public opinion to mark an historic turning point.

The psychological importance of that decision has probably been underestimated outside Germany. This was the first time since 1945 that Bonn had chosen

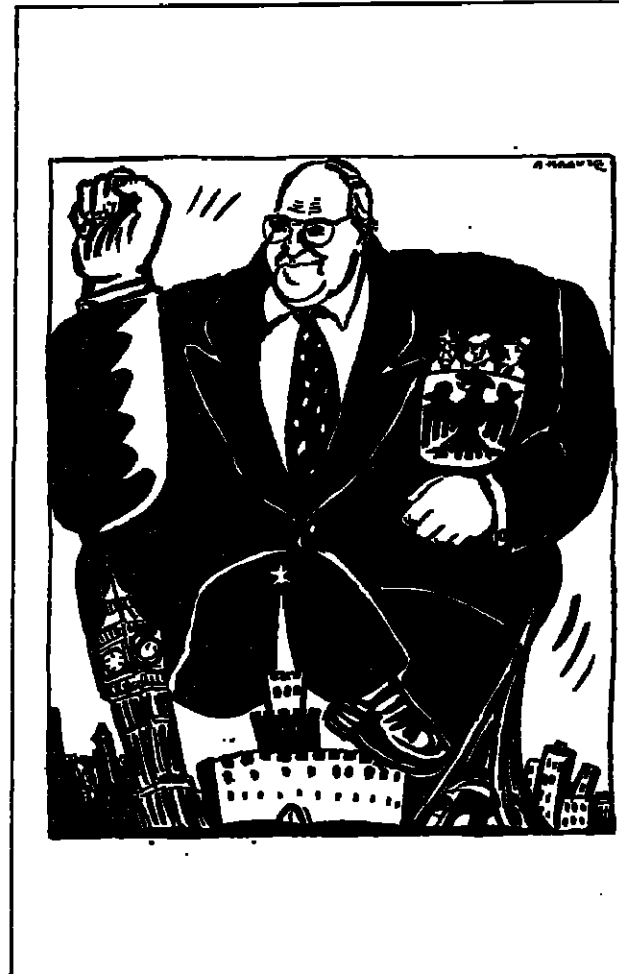
to participate fully in a military intervention beyond NATO frontiers — even though the mission of the German troops, who are based in Croatia and not Bosnia, is mainly of a logistical nature.

As a result of that decision, as well as the political consensus that led up to it, the Germans at last feel in a position to fulfil the responsibilities incumbent upon them in the new world context. Only a few weeks ago, it would have been unthinkable for Germany to agree to send troops to a region like the former Yugoslavia, where the crimes of the Wehrmacht are still fresh in people's minds. That policy of non-intervention, long advocated by Chancellor Helmut Kohl himself, was scrapped for good in 1995.

As Josef Joffe of the Süddeutsche Zeitung puts it: "Bonn is no longer Berner." In other words, the chequered diplomacy that allowed Germany to take part, from a distance, in the Gulf war can no longer serve as a substitute for foreign policy on the part of a sovereign Germany.

Even though a majority of Germans continue to cite Switzerland or Sweden as the country of their dreams, the nation's governing elite has put Germany on a different course, which is more consistent with the actual importance of the world's third-largest economic power.

The year 1995, then, will be seen as a watershed. The 50th anniversary of the end of the World War II coincided with a mounting sense among Germans of a "return to normality." In countries where memories of the Nazi past are still painfully vivid, such as Israel, the Netherlands and Poland, Kohl was welcomed as a special ally in 1995 and hailed as "the strong man of Europe." At Jerusalem's Hebrew University, a chair of European studies was even named af-



ter him following his visit to Israel last June.

"Normality means knowing your own history and facing up to it," says parliamentary deputy Karl Lamers, of the Christian Democratic Union. Germany plainly feels moved to cast a more dispassionate eye on its past. In the view of one leading government figure, "We're getting closer to the day when Germany will be able to talk about Hitler the way the French talk about Napoleon." That shift in public opinion has naturally given the government greater room for manoeuvre in deciding on its foreign policy.

A new and more political dimension has been added to the traditional ingredients of German economic

power, as symbolised by the Deutschmark. Germany now accepts the consequences of its new-found power and the responsibilities inherent in it.

It is true that a certain degree of restraint remains one of the major planks of German foreign policy. No German leader, for example, would dream of declaring that he hoped his country would "show the way" to the rest of the world, as Jacques Chirac did on May 7, 1995, in his first speech as French president.

But German leaders are showing increasingly frequent signs of suffering from what a French diplomat has described, as "power flushes". It is hard to tell whether they display

such symptoms because they are politically naïve or because they are simply too big for their boots. When, at the end of October, Mr. Kohl declined an invitation to attend the United Nations' 50th anniversary celebrations, even though the leaders of 150 other countries throughout the world were due to make the journey to New York, one could not help thinking that Germany was now determined to be treated with special consideration. That impression was reinforced when Mr. Kohl explained that he did not feel he could content himself with "speaking for five minutes" after such a long journey.

It is tempting to suppose that Germany has "great power" pretensions. But things are not as simple as that. It is true that Bonn calls the tune when it comes to defining the terms of the transition to the third stage of European economic and monetary union, and that German leaders tend increasingly often to lecture their partners, including the United States, on the need for budgetary discipline.

It is equally true that the Germans now stick up for their own interests more staunchly than they used to in the past, notably when it is a case of tipping the balance of EU financial aid in favour of central and eastern Europe. But the word Führungsmacht (leading nation) remains taboo in Germany. It is never used except in right-wing intellectual circles. "We don't want to become a bigger fish than the rest," says a highly placed foreign ministry official (note the use of an aquatic metaphor redolent of harmony and silence, not power and confrontation).

There can be no doubt that Germans were flattered to be offered "partnership in leadership" by President Bush in May 1989, and again by Presi-

dent Clinton in July 1994. But they discovered in 1995 that their special relationship with the U.S. did not rule out fundamental, if minor, differences of approach and even, on occasion, latent tensions.

There were several strong indications in 1995, above all with the Dayton conference, that the U.S. was sometimes more concerned to protect its own interests than those of Europe. As a result, the German leadership is convinced that a strengthening of European integration is now more urgent than ever, as was demonstrated by its decision to opt for a European military observation satellite in close collaboration with France.

German public opinion is not yet ready to accept the idea of German hegemony. What is more, Germany's past, combined with the likelihood that its population will dwindle, prevents it from playing a role like that of the U.S. anywhere in the world. This is supported by the fact that in central and eastern Europe English is more popular as a language than German.

Germany, which likes to define itself as a "post-national power", prefers to leave others to push through proposals that are close to its heart. As Mr. Lamers said recently: "We must lead the way without the others noticing." There could be no neater way of expressing the notion that what is good for Germany is good for Europe.

To be sure, 1995 was also marked by serious doubts in Germany about the future of European integration. But in the last account Mr. Kohl succeeded in achieving through peaceful means what others before him, and as far as back as Bismarck, had tried to impose by military conquest: a zone of peace and prosperity all round Germany's borders.

Le Monde.

Hong Kong in 1996: The year to face the 'Tryst with destiny'

By Philip Bowring

HONG KONG — Despite all the official optimism about a smooth transition that attended this week's meeting in Beijing between the British and Chinese foreign ministers, 1996 promises to be a torrid year for Hong Kong.

The overhyped achievements of the Malcolm Rifkind-Qian Qichen talks provide only brief diversion from the fact that 1996, the last full year under British sovereignty, will be one when many will have to look 1997 straight in the eye. It will be a year of decision for Beijing on how it intends to treat the territory after it gains control. Its attitudes will in turn shape the decisions of tens of thousands of Hong Kong residents who have so far adopted a wait-and-see attitude to the city-state's "tryst with destiny."

Influencing individual decisions, too, will be the state of the local economy. Prospects are for another year of at best modest growth. An overvalued currency, the deflationary aftermath of the asset price bubble that peaked in early 1994, slower growth in China trade and consumer caution in advance of 1997 are all a drag. The main stimulus is from spending on massive infrastructure projects related to the new airport, which will peak in 1996 at \$5 billion.

At the heart of the matter of the future is a paradox. Hong Kong has been promised a "high degree of autonomy." Yet the territory comes directly under the sway of central government organs, particularly the state council.

Will these organs be capable of self-denial and adopt a hands-off policy towards Hong Kong's domestic arrangements? The omens are not good.

Beijing has taken to attacking all manner of things in Hong Kong, ranging from its Bill of Rights to welfare payments. But Larry Yung, the head of the Beijing-controlled China International Trust & Investment Corp. and the son of a former Chinese vice president, Rong Yiren, warned recently that un-

warranted meddling could "kill" Hong Kong.

Mr. Yung's candor was refreshing. It contrasts with statements of those local business leaders and knighted recipients of colonial honours who have been anxious to prove their "patriotism" by telling Beijing what it wants to hear, rather than what Hong Kong's people feel in their hearts. It is not too late for Beijing to learn not to boss Hong Kong around — but it's almost too late. Whether it is prepared to learn will depend on the uncertain evolution of political and nationalist tendencies in Beijing will not help Hong Kong.

The Wei Jingsheng jailing, attacks on "unpatriotic" local media, summary mass executions in Shenzhen — all add to local concerns about the future. The barometers that Hong Kong's people will be particularly watching in 1996 are:

■ Beijing's approach to constitutional arrangements.

It has recently appointed the 150-member Preparatory Committee, which is supposed to guide the transition. Although billed as "pro-business" because it includes a large number of tycoons, it has excluded all members of Hong Kong's most popular political group, the Democratic Party, which is dismissed as "unpatriotic" or even "subversive." Interest in the rubber-stamp committee will focus on whether it sets up a shadow legislature that poses a direct challenge to existing institutions and sets out its own policy and legislative agenda. Beijing has vowed to replace the current elected Legislative Council with a more convenient body consistent with either Leninist or neo-Confucian authoritarianism. Local democrats are unlikely to give up without a fight.

■ The nomination, expected by midyear, of the first chief executive of the SAR government.

No one expects the chief executive to be as independent of Beijing as colonial governors have been of London, but the name will

be an important indicator of Beijing's thinking. Several of the names on the informal short list that has been making the rounds in Hong Kong have been competing to ingratiate themselves with Beijing. By rights, this ought to rule them out of contention. Hong Kong might be better off with a tough old Communist operator than an honest but weak-kneed local dignitary or opportunistic business figure. But with Deng Xiaoping on his deathbed, the chances of Beijing's choosing a strong personality are few. It will want a figure who appears respectable but does what he is told.

■ Determination by Beijing of the future rights of foreign passport holders. This affects in different ways almost the whole upper 20 per cent income echelon of Hong Kong. The main issue is whether Hong Kong Chinese holding — as at least 600,000 do — citizenship or residence rights elsewhere will be able to retain those rights without forfeiting some of their rights in Hong Kong. A related question is whether those who have migrated will be able to return after 1997. In addition to Hong Kong-born people who have acquired foreign rights, there are large numbers of ethnic Chinese from Southeast Asia who may find that "patriotism" is a two-edged word. The future status of non-Chinese residents, of whatever nationality, is still ambiguous, and Hong Kong's major trading partners — including Britain — are being awkward by failing, so far, to promise visa-free entry to future SAR passport holders. Although Mr. Rifkind promised progress on this issue, Britain's influence over other countries — which are fearful of floods of Chinese migrants — is limited.

These passport and nationality questions are pivotal for Hong Kong Chinese, whose concerns are first and foremost for their families. But for Beijing, passports and citizenship are matters of national pride. Rich Hong Kong's evident reluctance to rejoin the motherland is

understandable but incites retribution. Meanwhile, there is an inexhaustible supply of mainlanders eager to quibble their salaries by filling the shoes of the émigrés to Canada.

■ Attempts (sometimes abetted by interested local parties) by Beijing to influence economic policies and business franchises in Hong Kong.

While debate on policy within Hong Kong on issues such as taxation and spending priorities is natural, it should be no concern of Beijing's. So far, attempts to interfere may be attributable to paranoia about British intentions or, as with the airport and container terminal, have been used by Beijing as political leverage. Such interventions may wither as 1997 nears. However, every interference raises issues of future financial autonomy.

Will Hong Kong really have control over its fiscal reserves? Or will they be put to "patriotic" use to fund the Three Gorges Dam? Will the Hong Kong currency remain pegged to the U.S. dollar, or will it, before the decade is over, become a convertible version of China's yuan? Ironically, the stability of the yuan, China's acquisition of \$70 billion in foreign currency reserves, and the shift of Hong Kong industry to the mainland have combined to reduce the relative importance of the dollar-pegged Hong Kong currency and indeed of Hong Kong as a generator of foreign exchange for China.

All these issues boil down to one: how to preserve Hong Kong's autonomy. That is not a theoretical issue. It is the only way Hong Kong can preserve institutions, social mores, income levels and asset values so at variance with the mother country. Even now, after a decade of Dengist growth in southern China and taking account of recent price falls in Hong Kong — property values across the border in Shenzhen are only a fifth of those in Hong Kong.

International Herald Tribune.

Iraq: any chance of change?

To the Editor:

THE JORDAN Times certainly deserves to be commended for its coverage of the news related to Iraq, particularly within the past few weeks. The coverage has been credible, trustworthy, unbiased and based upon various sources when it comes to reporting certain events.

Yet one cannot but wonder about the present situation involving Iraq, now in its sixth year of complete political isolation and economic embargo imposed by the Security Council of the United Nations as a result of the ill-fated invasion by Iraq of its neighbouring Kuwait.

One fact for sure, it is the Iraqi people who are paying the price and not their leaders who seem to be more consolidated in power and wealth than ever. After so many years, the Iraqi leadership, in order to solve what it described as deteriorating economy and skyrocketing inflation, decided to increase the cost of services and utilities and to sell more and more of government's property. Obviously, the cream of these sales will go to the ruling inner circle and close allies as it happened in 1987 and 1988, when scores of factories, farms and other establishments were sold at a fraction of the market price to certain people.

The Iraqi president ordered to stop printing money of which he had already printed and distributed trillions of dinars. The value of the dinar is now a mere fraction of its official value. By simple calculation; multiplying the official rate of exchange 3.2 dollars to the dinar by the present market value of the dollar (around 3000 Iraqi dinars), the result is 9600 which means that the value of the Iraqi dinar is 1/9600 of its real value i.e. around 0.01 per cent of its official value.

On the political front, the Iraqi regime is no less persistent than before in following its brutal policies. After the farce of the so-called referendum that confirmed the president for yet another seven years with no less than 99.96 per cent of the vote. The official records showed that only about 3000 Iraqis voted "no." Those were labelled as traitors by Iraqi Vice-President Izzat Al Doori. The regime is intending to stage another two theatrical plays within the next few months; one for a so-called National Council and the other for municipalities, both of which will intentionally exclude the Kurdish areas, which could only be interpreted as yet another measure to consolidate the division within the country that the regime claims to defend.

With all those events going on inside Iraq, the numerous Iraqi opposition groups are divided. The different factions have become unworthy of representing the Iraqi people as they continue quarrelling among themselves for personal reasons and conflict of alliance with major and regional powers?

It is the vast silent majority of the Iraqi people inside the country as well as those living in exile who must think of their responsibilities towards their homeland and people and cry out for action to change. Everyone in his own way, individually and collectively.

The calls by the countries of the region to save the integrity and unity of Iraq and its people should be genuine and sincere and with the necessary coordination among the various countries, specially Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to stop further suffering of the Iraqi people; disintegration of the Iraqi society as well as the mass exodus of the majority of the Iraqi intellectuals, professionals and others.

Hassan Andeh,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

S. Africa's Afrikaners try to take on Mandela

By Anton Ferreira
Reuter

JOHANNESBURG — Theo De Jager calls himself a good Afrikaner, so when right-wing radicals tried to burn South Africa's new democratic flag he leapt in to save it.

After a short tug-of-war punctuated by the grunts of a dozen burly, close-cropped Afrikaners, the flag was pulled to safety.

The scuffle at the weekend was an inauguration start for a new campaign to promote the interests of the ethnic group that created apartheid in 1948 but lost political power in South Africa's first all-race elections in April 1994.

It took place at a rally in Pretoria attended by about 1,000 people to launch the foundation for equality before the law, known by its Afrikaans acronym SGR, representing Afrikaners who say they are fed up with the way they are being treated by President Nelson Mandela's government of national unity.

Speeches at the rally were notable for their mild rhetoric, compared with the threats of all-out war issued by right-wing, pro-apartheid whites in the run-up to the 1994 elections.

Those threats came to little, apart from a brief series of car bombs at the time of the poll, and most of today's Afrikaners talk of nothing more radical than the possibility of strikes and demonstrations.

"We can't shy away from industrial action and mass protests any longer," said one speaker, educationalist Piet Van Der Merwe, who suggested the Afrikaner learn a lesson from the recent strikes in France that forced changes in government policy.

But he added: "I know it's not in the character of the Afrikaner to make himself guilty of this kind of behaviour."

The moderate line was schooled by others. "I want to tell Mr. Mandela with the necessary respect that people involved in this effort are not fools who long for the past," said General Johan Van Der

Merwe, a retired commissioner of police.

"We want to play a constructive role and we accept change, but we want to put it very plainly, we will not allow our rights to be trampled or our people to be hijacked."

But the likelihood of the SRG succeeding is undermined by the failure of Afrikaners, descendants of 17th century Dutch, French and German settlers, to bridge the differences between themselves.

Most of the Afrikaner right-wing's radical leaders have been silent since the elections and they stayed away from the SRG rally.

But Willie Lewies, a firebrand from the white Transvaal agricultural union, said in a speech complaining at Mr. Mandela's plans to redistribute farm land from whites to blacks that the right still clung to its ideal of a sovereign Afrikaner state.

"We did not go willingly into the present system," he said. "And you will not succeed in your aims without the participation of the Afrikaner veterans who have stayed away from here today."

Mr. De Jager, opening the rally after the fight over the new South African flag, said the SRG would accommodate symbols from across the full political spectrum.

"There are many people who respect this flag," he said to jeers from some in the audience. "People who are good Afrikaners, and I am one of them."

Mr. De Jager, chairman of the SRG, hosted Mr. Mandela later at a meeting of another Afrikaner group, the Ruiterwag (mounted guard).

In a speech to the Ruiterwag Mr. Mandela took a hardline against the SRG, saying among other things that its criticism of a "truth commission" into apartheid-era abuses left "a bitter taste in the mouth."

The SRG says the commission, due to start work this year under Archbishop Desmond Tutu, promises to be a "witch-hunt" against Afrikaners.

NATO passes key tests in Bosnia — for now

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

SARAJEVO — After almost a month in Bosnia, the NATO-led peace force can claim that it has successfully kept the lid on the Balkan cauldron — at least for the time being.

NATO has managed to fend off the immediate threat of a major Serb exodus from Sarajevo without making concessions.

Under pressure from the United States and the European Union (EU), tensions between Croats and Muslims in the divided city of Mostar have eased.

U.S. President Bill Clinton held talks with Croatian President Franjo Tudjman

on Saturday to try to bolster the shaky Muslim-Croat federation which is vital to lasting peace.

North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) pressure has led to the release of 16 civilians taken prisoner by the Serbs, although the Bosnian government says five more are still being held.

Alliance officials say plans to pull the military forces of the Serbs and the Muslim-Croat federation back behind zones of separation are on schedule for completion later this week.

Although a woman was killed in a surprise rocket attack on a tram in Sarajevo last week and two people have died in Mostar,

NATO says its presence has brought relative calm to Bosnia after more than three years of war.

"There has been a tangible turnaround from war towards a real effort to achieve peace," NATO spokesman Brigadier Andrew Cumming told reporters on Saturday.

One of the great concerns of NATO commanders was that early casualties among the troops could destroy support for the operation, particularly in the United States.

So far, those fears have proven unfounded, with just a few soldiers wounded by gunfire or mines. More than half of the total force now is deployed, with about 36,000 troops in Bosnia.

In its major show of strength in recent weeks, NATO has been keen to distance itself from the lightly armed U.N. peacekeeping mission in Bosnia, which lost the trust of the people.

The IFOR commander, U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, has spent much time talking to regional political leaders who signed the peace deal last month, giving them an uncompromising message.

"The message is that we want total commitment, that (political leaders) are responsible for each and every act carried out in violation of the peace agreement," Adm. Cumming said.

Nevertheless, there are

difficult times ahead for the alliance, which sees the Bosnia operation — the biggest troop deployment in Europe since World War II — as a key test of its role in the post-cold war world.

It is still possible Serb leaders could order a mass exodus from Sarajevo before Serb-held suburbs revert to government control. NATO would then have to deal with a flood of up to 70,000 refugees and perhaps a "scorched earth" policy which would leave parts of the city in flames.

At the beginning of February, Serb, Muslim and Croat authorities have to leave those areas of Bosnia which are to be handed over to the other side under

the complex territorial trade-offs in the peace agreement reached in Dayton, Ohio.

Then, just over two months from now, military forces from whichever side was given those areas in Dayton can move in — another sensitive deadline.

The civilian reconstruction programme for Bosnia, run by former Swedish Premier Carl Bildt, has got off to a slow start and has many obstacles to overcome in rebuilding the country's infrastructure.

But the biggest question of all comes at the end of the 1996, when the NATO force plans to leave Bosnia. Without the alliance, will there be enough stability to prevent a return to war?

Bosnia trip shows promise and pitfalls for Clinton

By Gene Gibbons
Reuter

WASHINGTON — Even by the warp-speed standards of jet-age presidential travel, Bill Clinton's weekend trip to visit U.S. troops in Bosnia was unusual. He swept through four countries in just 18 hours, melding military pomp, diplomacy and election year politics.

At every stop along the way, Mr. Clinton praised the American men and women involved in the dangerous job of helping police a fragile peace in the Balkans after 43 months of barbaric civil war.

"I know you've been trained to fight wars and to win them. You are the best in the world at that," he told whooping tankers of the first armoured division preparing to convoy into Bosnia from a staging point in southeast Hungary near the Sava River.

"This mission is different," Mr. Clinton said. "We have asked you not to

fight a war, but to give an people exhausted by war the strength to make and stay at peace."

Mr. Clinton, who also made stops in Croatia and Italy during his trip, remarked incessantly that the NATO-led peace mission reflected how far the world has come since the nuclear terror-filled days of the old cold war between the West and the Soviet empire.

Rusting hulks of abandoned Russian-built MiG jet fighters littered the landscape at an old communist Warsaw Pact air base in Hungary that has been turned into a vast supply hub for U.S. operations in Bosnia.

Russian soldiers from a brigade that will serve alongside American troops in northeast Bosnia were in the ranks of a military honour guard that welcomed Mr. Clinton to the muddy headquarters camp of "Task Force Eagle" near the war-scarred Bosnian city of Tuzla.

"From the ashes of war in

Bosnia, you and they together are raising the torch of a new, undivided Europe. Step by steady step, you are making history here in Bosnia," Mr. Clinton assured U.S. troops during a fog-delayed, abbreviated visit to Tuzla air base.

Throughout the European part of the trip, Mr. Clinton travelled aboard a mammoth, highly advanced C-17 military cargo jet. Leaving Bosnia, he even experienced an "assault takeoff" that saw the plane leap into the air in 60 seconds using only 1,800 feet of runway.

It all made for great television pictures likely to be seen again and again in Mr. Clinton's reelection campaign, and stole headlines from Saturday night's Republican presidential candidate debate in Iowa.

It will also be mined for talking points in his state of the union speech on January 23, which will effectively launch Mr. Clinton's bid for a second four-year term



as America's leader.

And the trip had the rush of being just a little bit risky. As author Graham Greene once observed of fact-finding visits to global flash points, there is nothing like "that feeling of exhilaration that a measure of danger brings to a visitor with a return ticket."

But Mr. Clinton's whirlwind tour of the Balkan frontlines also served as a

reminder that the tinderbox region could easily become the graveyard of his reelection hopes.

If the Bosnia peace agreement fails to hold and U.S. troops start coming home in body bags voters are likely to hold Mr. Clinton accountable on election day on November 5.

And the military cooperation between Washington and Moscow that Mr.

Clinton celebrated may well depend on the outcome of Russia's presidential election in June.

Many analysts believe that the current cooperation in Bosnia could quickly turn to confrontation if the Russians fulfil the predictions of current polls and elect a new leader less friendly to the United States.

Iran and the UAE: meeting in the dark

By Pirouz Mojtahed
Zadeh

Surprised was perhaps an understatement when observers received news of a meeting between "experts" from Iran and the United Arab Emirates in Doha, Qatar in December. Considering the deep differences between the two sides on the issue, AE claims of sovereignty over the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, it was intriguing why they decided to meet and scuss the issue without notifying their radically differing positions.

The official explanation is that Qatari officials had mediated between them for several months and convinced them to meet and negotiate their differences. But transpired was that the talks succeeded in bringing the two sides together without endorsing a brokered common ground for negotiations. Each side clung to its own uncompromising position: the negotiation was therefore a non-starter.

The United Arab Emirates has over the past three years been hard at work politicising and internationalising the issue of its claims of ownership of the three islands, arguing that they belonged to the emirates of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah prior to the formation of the UAE, and that the Iranians "occupied" them by force in 1971 when the Emirates were weak. While maintaining a relatively low profile, Iran adhere to its official position that "these islands have always belonged to Iran; the British took them in 1903 and gave them to the Emirates but returned them to Iran in 1971. These islands are under Iranian sovereignty and if others do not accept this reality, that is their problem."

The 1971 developments involved a Memorandum of Understanding signed by Iran and Sharjah under the auspices of the British Foreign Office, whereby the two sides agreed not to accept each other's claim of full sovereignty over the whole of Abu Musa island, but to ex-

ercise shared jurisdiction on the basis of a north-south divide. This was the outcome of about a year of Anglo-Iranian negotiations. The memorandum was implemented, on Nov. 30, 1971 when Iranian military units landed on the two Tunb islands, located on the Iranian side of the Gulf. The move was not objected to by the British who were still in charge of the Emirates' territorial defence and foreign relations. An Arab complaint to the UN Security Council in December 1971 failed to cast doubt on the legitimacy of these developments.

After the Gulf crisis, the UAE broke a silence of 21 years and announced claims of ownership over all three islands after Iranian authorities prevented some 100 people of various Arab nationalities from entering. Abu Musa in April and September 1992. Furthermore, the UAE brought its claims to the attention of the Arabs and the world at large with noticeable success; the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has

issued many statements supporting the UAE's claims; the Arab League has done the same and UAE officials have brought up the issue in their annual addresses to the UN assembly.

The president of the UAE threatened in 1992 to take the case to international tribunals. These threats have been repeated several times, and it was shortly before the Doha meeting that UAE officials were blustering about wanting to take Iran to the International Court of Justice at The Hague. News of the Doha meeting came amidst this hardening UAE stance, which caused much surprise. The meeting itself was doomed from the beginning because of the apparent lack of any terms of reference for negotiation.

For a long time the UAE was complaining that Iran did not want to negotiate. The Iranians, for their part, argued many times that they were prepared to negotiate on the "misunderstanding" between the two. Hence, the two countries differ even on

what to negotiate about. The Iranians announced they were going to Doha to prepare the grounds for high-level negotiations on the basis of the UAE president's letter of 20 April 1992 to President Rafsanjani. In it Sheikh Zayed informed Mr. Rafsanjani that there was some occurrence in Abu Musa island of shared Iran-UAE jurisdiction which could cause misunderstanding between the two sides, and that the UAE minister of foreign affairs was being sent to Tehran to settle the problem.

By invoking this letter, the Iranians made it abundantly clear that they were going to Doha to talk about UAE misunderstanding of the 1992 Abu Musa incidents, not to negotiate on the "ownership" of the three islands. It can only be assumed that the UAE went to Doha because they wanted to complete the dossier of their efforts to settle the dispute by "peaceful means." In other words, neither side meant to sit down and really negotiate in

the first place.

What has emerged from the Doha meeting, however, is a fine new line of diplomatic differences; the UAE representatives unilaterally told news media on Nov. 22 that the talks had collapsed because of lack of cooperation from the Iranians in setting an agenda for high-level negotiations. While they spoke, Iranian representatives remained in the negotiating room ready to continue talks with their UAE counterparts, thus demonstrating that they were willing to continue with negotiations. The Iranian foreign ministry spokesman described, on the same day, the Doha talks as "positive." This was undoubtedly to assert a new frontier of diplomatic discrepancy between Tehran and Abu Dhabi.

The writer teaches at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. The article is reprinted from Middle East International.

Yemeni journalists struggle to enjoy new freedom

By Maher Chmaytelli
Agence France Presse

SANAA — Yemeni journalists hoping to enjoy new press freedoms are struggling to overcome fears lingering from a totalitarian past, occasional harassment and financial troubles.

"The press is one hundred per cent free," Information Minister Abdul Rahman Al Akwaa declared in an interview with AFP. "The law is the only limit and there is no journalist in Yemeni prisons."

But journalists here say that words are not enough to turn into reality favourable news media laws adopted after the former North and South Yemen united in 1990 and a multi-party political system was formed.

"Pluralism is recent. It goes back to 1990. There is still no real democratic tradition," the head of the journalists union, Abdul Bari Taher, said.

Abdul Aziz Al Saqqaf, the managing editor of the Yemen Times, said "the not-too-distant totalitarian past causes journalists to avoid asking the government embarrassing questions even if they don't have to worry."

Self-censorship has persisted because of problems faced by many journalists working for opposition or independent newspapers.

Six journalists were arrested in 1995 for several hours or days after they published articles critical of the government while another reporter was beaten by unknown assailants, Mr. Taher said.

The information ministry, which usually says it has nothing to do with arrests carried out by provincial authorities, intervened to free the journalists, he added.

Journalists face occasional discrimination such as being banned from certain press conferences, Mr. Saqqaf said, adding he has been summoned several times by the authorities for his work.

The news media also comes under financial pressure, which is especially risky for the Yemen Times because it is the only publication that is financially independent.

This English-language weekly has successfully balanced the deficit between the cost of production and circulation revenue through advertising income.

It sells for 10 riyals (less than 10 cents) but costs 70 riyals (50 cents) per copy, Mr. Saqqaf said.

Advertising is strong because the paper targets businessmen, embassies and foreigners who enjoy a higher standard of living than most people in Yemen, one of the world's poorest countries with a gross national product (GNP) of about \$310 per person per year.

Mr. Taher said the Yemeni press has also found it difficult to develop because Yemenis are so poor and most of them cannot read or write.

Yemen's three daily newspapers are linked to the government just to survive financially, he said.

Journalists in the government-run media are treated as civil servants and must receive government permission to cover events abroad or contact foreign diplomats in Yemen.

Apart from the three government-run dailies, there are party-affiliated weeklies and the Yemen Times, "none of the 150 publications approved by the government appears regularly and sometimes not at all," Mr. Taher said.

European police patrol mean streets of Mostar

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuter

MOSTAR, Bosnia — On the dangerous streets of Mostar, one of the world's most unusual police forces is at work.

Imagine a city that is a mixture of Berlin in the old war and 1920s gangster-era Chicago, a place ruined and divided by bitter conflicts, riven by hatred and mistrust.

Now imagine being a police officer in that city. You do not speak the local language, you do not know the streets — and you have no powers of arrest.

For the multinational European police force sent to Mostar in southwestern Bosnia in 1994, the situation is all too real. Their job, part of a two-year European Union pro-

ject to unite the Muslims and Croats who fought a bloody war over Mostar, is to build up a single local police force that will ensure law and order returns to the city's streets.

"It's a very special unit," said acting police commissioner Helmut Janiesch, a German who heads the Western European Union (WEU) force of about 180 officers from a dozen countries.

"You have to be able to tolerate a lot of frustration working here, because we have no executive powers. We cannot stop crime, we can only observe. Most of our officers are armed, but that's only for self-defence."

Bringing together the Croat and Muslim police has been a difficult task,

made almost impossible by events this month.

Early on New Year's day, Croat police shot dead a Muslim youth in his car, using armour-piercing bullets. Within a week, two Muslim police officers had been wounded with similar ammunition and a Croat officer killed on patrol.

"We are due to leave in July, when our mandate runs out. Given what's happened now, it's hard to see how we can build a united police force," said one European officer. "After all, these people still want to shoot at each other."

"The officers — from Austria, Britain, France, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Sweden — made their headquarters at the

old courthouse.

The building is on the confrontation line dividing Muslim east Mostar from the Croat west, amid buildings that were almost totally destroyed during the heaviest fighting in 1993.

Inside, it could be a police station in any crime-ridden city, the air filled with shouted commands, the crackle of radios from the operations room, ringing telephones.

There are duty rotas posted on the dirty white walls. Flak jackets are piled in one corner, cups of coffee and full ashtrays litter the desks.

Men — there are just four women officers on the force — stand chatting in doorways or gathering in groups, waiting to go out on patrol or to attend a brief-

ing. A blond Swedish policeman accosts one of his British colleagues.

"Hey, can you get me one of those funny helmets you wear in England?" he asks. His fellow officer promises him one.

They patrol the poorly-lit streets 24 hours a day, especially the confrontation line on revolution boulevard.

The Croat half of the city was barely damaged in the fighting but there are few real jobs to be had.

Organised crime — extortion, prostitution, drugs — is rife. There is often unexplained shooting at night.

"We know there is a mafia operating here," said Dutch Sergeant Marc Goossens. "Quite honestly, I don't really care that

much, as long as they are just killing each other."

One of the most frequent crimes, police say, is car theft.

The European police force has had several of its white-painted vehicles stolen, some of them taken brazenly from the parking lot in front of the courthouse.

Relations with the local police can be strained. The Croat commissioner accused the European force of cowardice recently, drawing a sharp written response from Commissioner Janiesch.

The Europeans, who come for six-month or one-year tours of duty, wear their national uniforms but the lingua franca is English. Off duty, they move around in pairs for security.

Jordan Loan Guarantee Company backs JD 1.8m of loans

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Loan Guarantee Company (JLGC) General Manager Jamal Salah Sunday said the company last year guaranteed JD 1.8 million out of a total JD 4.3 million of loans granted to small and medium size projects in the various parts of the country. Speaking at a press conference, Mr. Salah stressed that projects established outside the Greater Amman Area enjoyed incentives reaching 75 per cent of the loan amount. He noted that the company offered loan guarantees worth JD 2.5 million to finance projects in the Greater Amman area, in addition to loans worth JD 7.7 for 85 projects outside the Amman municipality area. He also said that the company offered similar incentives, reaching 75 per cent

of the loan value for women projects. Dr. Salah said the company has been designated as the agent in Jordan for the Arab Investment Guarantee Corporation to facilitate loan guarantees to Jordanian exporters, and to encourage them to increase their exports to sister Arab countries.

He said that the company's board of directors has recently decided to increase the company's capital from JD 7 million to JD 10 million to provide enough resources to support the company's programmes.

On his company's future plans, Dr. Salah said the company plans to expand its loan guarantee activities in 1996 and to introduce a new programme aimed at guar-

anteeing loans to exporters and guaranteeing risks of loans granted by commercial banks and financial institutions. The loan guarantee export programme will be carried out gradually in two stages, the pre-shipping and post shipping stages.

Dr. Salah emphasised that the company seeks through this programme to protect Jordanian exporters from the risks which they might face, thus encouraging them to establish trade relations with new importers and tapping new external markets.

On other objectives, he said JLGC aims to overcome difficulties facing small and medium-size projects when trying to obtain loans from commercial and investment banks.

Dubai braces for biggest Mideast shopping gala

DUBAI (AFP) — Thousands of companies and shops in the Gulf emirate of Dubai are readying to put their goods on sale at the Middle East's biggest shopping festival that could attract more than one million people.

With gold expected to be one of the main attractions at the 40-day fete, Dubai's imports of the yellow metal are set to increase by nearly 50 tonnes in 1996, the highest level recorded in the oil-rich region.

The festival, opening of Feb. 15, is expected to lure nearly 1.5 million local and foreign visitors who will spend over one billion dirhams (\$272 million). The figure does not include spending on hotels and other services, projected to exceed seven billion dirhams (\$1.9 billion).

"This novel economic initiative will give a strong boost to the trade and tourism sectors in Dubai," said Sheikh Ahmad Al Maktum, chairman of the civil aviation department and the committee organising the festival. "It will become an annual event and will contribute to further strengthening the image of Dubai on the world economic map," he added.

Around 18 million dirhams (\$4.9 million) have been set as a budget for the festival, which will also include daily fireworks, cultural events, dances by world troupes and other recreational activities. Participants have been ordered to offer compulsory price reductions of between 20 and 70 per cent. Violators of the order or those who sell fake items could be ejected and fined up to 50,000

dirhams (\$13,600).

Customers will also have the chance to win daily raffles for luxury cars and a kilogramme of 24-carat gold.

The gala includes hundreds of items such as gold, electronics, cars, computers, clothes, foodstuffs, machinery, and home appliances. "We expect a strong demand for gold and other jewellery items at the festival as Dubai is already a key centre for this trade," said Mohammad Al Abbar, director of Dubai's economy department.

Dubai, the second biggest and wealthiest member of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is one of the top gold importers in the world.

Officials figures showed its gold purchases stood at 257 tonnes in 1994 and the figure is expected to have reached 300 tonnes in 1995. The imports are set to exceed 350 tonnes this year due to a forecast rush at the festival.

Organisers said the sale of gold pieces at the festival was expected to reach between 40 and 45 tonnes, making Dubai the world's second biggest centre for gold trade after Singapore among non-producing countries.

Dubai is also the main commercial entrepot in the Gulf, with its trade accounting for nearly one fifth of the region's non-oil trade.

Its main reexport markets are Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, India, Pakistan, eastern Europe, South East Asia, Russia and other former Soviet republics.

More than 400,000 people from the former Soviet Union visit Dubai every year to buy electronics and other products, taking advantage of its cheap prices and the absence of taxes on imports and exports.

Several streets near the emirate's famous creek have been reserved for the shopping festival while small stalls have been erected along its banks to sell consumer goods, handicraft and other traditional items.

Would-be shoppers are expected to come from Iran and other Gulf states and as far as Eastern Europe, Russia, Central Asia, India and Arab countries.

"Shipping and other facilities await the visitors," Sheikh Ahmad said. "Hotels have also been told to offer price reductions of up to 40 per cent and not to charge children under 12 years accompanying their parents."

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Marka Airport to be revived soon

★ A new airline company to operate between Marka Airport and other airports in the region is expected to be set up soon, according to airport director Mohammad Abu Saad. He said that while the Queen Alia International Airport will continue to receive Royal Jordanian aircraft, the Marka Airport will serve the new local company which will operate flights to Aqaba, Tel Aviv and other airports in neighbouring countries. Currently, said Mr. Abu Saad, work is underway for refurbishing Marka Airport facilities at the estimated cost of JD 380,000 to serve the new company which will start operations with two daily flights to Aqaba and five weekly flights to Israel before expanding its operations to include Alexandria, Damascus, Beirut and Larnaka (Al Ra'i).

Hotels, restaurants begin charging new rates for official guests, delegations

★ HOTELS, resthouses and restaurants have started charging new prices for official guests and delegations whose visits to Jordan are to be paid for by the treasury. According to a decision by the Council of Ministers, a one-night stay for one or two persons at a 5-star hotel would be JD 45. The charge would be JD 35, JD 25 and JD 18 at 4-star, 3-star and 2-star hotels respectively. At a one-star hotel, official guests and delegations will have to pay only JD 10. Continental, Arabic or buffet breakfast now costs JD 5 per person at 5-star hotels and JD 4 at 4-star hotels. The remaining three categories will charge JD 3, JD 2 and JD 1.500 respectively. Ordinary on buffet launch or dinner were fixed at JD 8 and JD 7 per person at 5-star and 4-star hotels respectively. At 3-star hotels the cost has become JD 5 while at the other two categories the price was set at JD 4 and JD 3. The cabinet decision conditioned the new charges on selecting the food from the menu that shows prices certified by the Ministry of Tourism and stipulates that the bill should not exceed the price of a buffet. Overnight stay covers only sleeping and does not include the additional tax which is neither included in the food price. The charges for a suite was left to an agreement between the two parties (Al Aswaq).

Central Bank raises interest rates

★ THE Central Bank of Jordan Saturday raised the interest on the dinar for six-months and three-months deposits to 9.5 per cent and 9.25 per cent respectively. Previously, the rates were nine per cent for six months and 8.75 per cent for three months deposits. As such interest on the dinar registers an unprecedented high which shows the determination of the central bank to protect the dinar exchange rate which has been fixed at 710 fils against the dollar since November 1995.

The higher interest rate widens the difference between the interests on the dinar and the dollar to four percentage points which could lure investors to transfer their dollar deposits into dinars to benefit from higher interest on the dinar, especially having the ability to return to the dollar at any time at the fixed rate. It is not known yet how the banks would respond to this new move by the central bank but it is believed that, due to stiff competition banks would not resort to increasing interest on their credits to prime clients although higher interest could be imposed on marginal clients (Al Ra'i).

Committee to reexamine cost of living

★ A committee representing the ministries of finance and planning and the Central Bank has been entrusted to reexamine the procedures and the equations used for calculating the index for the cost of living after the criticism regarding this issue levelled by the members of parliament. It is customary to reconsider and amend the components of the basket of goods and services upon which the cost of living index is based and 1996 is the year for such a revision (Al Ra'i).

JEA, French firm sign accord

★ THE Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) has signed a \$15 million agreement with the French Schneider Electric Company under which the company will establish a 400/132 kilovolt transmission station. The project aims at upgrading the voltage of the electric transmission line linking the southern Amman and the Aqaba transmission stations. The project, which is expected to be finalised in late 1997, will be partly financed through a loan from the Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET			
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ORGANIZED MARKET STOCK PRICE LIST FOR SUNDAY 14/01/1996			
COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE JD	INDEX
ARAB BANK PSC	60	12830	232.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	3750	12133	4.400
CITRO AMMAN BANK	3000	13000	4.500
BANK OF JORDAN	500	1800	3.700
JORDAN POST INVESTMENT BANK	2500	1.250	1.300
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	750	1875	2.400
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	1582	3765	2.380
THE HOUSING BANK	13850	13850	4.850
JORDAN KIWAT BANK	336	922	2.750
JORDAN GULF BANK	21750	22586	1.050
JORDAN SECURITIES BANK	8400	20157	3.560
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	13200	18119	5.80
ARAB BANK FOR INVESTMENT	180	1584	5.560
WILLAMETTE INVESTMENT BANK	15650	20331	1.350
BANKS SECTOR	74906	154991	INDEX NUMBER: 183.23
			CHANGE: -0.487
JORDAN FRENCH INSURANCE	220	881	2.780
JORDAN GULF INSURANCE	7545	21126	2.800
INSURANCE SECTOR	7765	21816	INDEX NUMBER: 130.02
			CHANGE: -0.147
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	58750	98154	1.710
JORDAN HOTEL & TOURISM	1206	12754	5.000
JORDAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINES	750	1935	2.620
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	7850	4630	1.750
REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT	1600	1552	990
JORDAN SECURITIES BANK	2930	30205	10.310
UNITED KIWAT BANK & CONSTRUCTION	2500	8540	2.160
ARAB TRAVEL FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	4263	14507	3.500
AMMAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	2800	2423	1.280
UNITED CO. FOR ORGANIZING LAND TRANS.	13500	30302	2.280
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	1250	1218	990
SERVICES SECTOR	92499	203217	INDEX NUMBER: 126.25
			CHANGE: -1.487
ATTACHEE CONST. MATERIAL MANUFACTURING	2000	2400	1.200
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	21104	76963	3.680
JORDAN PHOSPHATE ACID	2200	4164	3.190
THE ARAB POTASH	500	2675	5.380
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINERY	6234	61883	10.040
JORDAN MINERAL WATERS	1000	7608	7.600
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	1690	7407	4.420
JORDAN DAIRY	100	250	2.550
THE JORDAN FILMS MANUFACTURING	150	150	1.500
ARAB INDUSTRIES	750	1580	2.150
ARAB ALUMINUM DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2900	21234	7.450
ARAB ALUMINUM DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	2900	2478	8.400
INVESTMENT & POLICY	1000	560	570
ARAB POWER CONVERTING & TRADING	11150	15558	1.420
NATIONAL STEEL INDUSTRY	150	150	1.500
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	2197	2190	1.010
JORDAN CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	300	1580	5.020
NATIONAL CARBON & WIRE MANUFACTURING	700	6813	3.800
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	600	1035	1.750
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	5000	6350	3.180
JORDAN TRADING & SERVICES CO.	32350	60328	1.940
JORDAN BEN DAUD COMPANY	4850	6526	1.580
EL-DAN READY WEAR MANUFACTURING CO.	9813	20254	2.280
INTERNATIONAL COMBUSTION & CHEMISTRIES	1350	9869	1.370
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETABLE OIL INDUSTRIES	2286	3631	1.600
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	113249	322249	INDEX NUMBER: 121.02
			CHANGE: -0.913
GRAND TOTAL	249325	702170	INDEX NUMBER: 132.43
			CHANGE: -0.527
NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET: 125336			
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET: 104442			

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Financial Markets			
New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar			
Currency	Friday Jan. - 5 - 1996 Close	Friday Jan. - 12 - 1996 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound*	1.5525	1.5475	(0.32) %
Deutsche Mark	1.4395	1.4437	(0.29) %
Swiss Franc	1.1615	1.1630	(0.13) %
French Franc	4.9265	4.9520	(0.51) %
Japanese Yen	105.35	105.25	0.10 %
Euro-Currency Interest Rates*			
Currency	1-Month (%) Jan. - 5 - 1996	1-Month (%) Jan. - 12 - 1996	1-Year (%) Jan. - 5 - 1996
U.S. Dollar	5.65	5.23	5.47
Sterling Pound	6.43	6.32	6.44
Deutsche Mark	3.70	3.50	3.56
Swiss Franc	1.75	1.68	1.64
French Franc	4.75	4.56	4.55
Japanese Yen	0.27	0.50	0.37
Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent			
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin			
Date: January - 14 - 1996			
Currency	Bid	Offer	
U.S. Dollar	0.7060	0.7100	
Sterling Pound	1.0944	1.0999	
Deutsche Mark	0.4900	0.4925	
Swiss Franc	0.6080	0.6110	
French Franc	0.1429	0.1436	
Japanese Yen*	0.6715	0.6749	
Dutch Guilder	0.4375	0.4397	
Swedish Krona	-	-	
Italian Lira*	0.0449	0.0451	
Belgian Franc	-	-	
* Per 100			

Jordan teaches Stackhouse a lesson

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Michael Jordan says he wasn't trying to teach rookie Jerry Stackhouse a lesson. Stackhouse says he didn't need one in the first place. Still, there was some serious schooling going on.

Jordan poured in a season-high 48 points to lead the Chicago Bulls to a 120-93 rout of the Philadelphia 76ers Saturday after Stackhouse was reported as saying he could beat the league's leading scorer one-on-one.

Jordan shot 18-of-28 from the field, including 5-of-7 from three-point range, and added 10 rebounds before sitting down with 9:03 to play as the Bulls got their seventh straight win.

It was Jordan's 165th career 40-point game and high of the season.

"I'm not out to make him look bad. I wasn't trying to make it a 'mano a mano' thing," Jordan said. "I could tell that he was nervous. I told him to settle down."

"The one thing he learned tonight... he matured about this league. It may look easy. It's not easy. He grew up a little bit tonight. I know he said a lot of stuff. I used it as a motivational factor from a competitive standpoint."

"He could have scored 80 if I let him," Bulls coach Phil Jackson said.

Scottie Pippen scored 20 points and Dennis Rodman pulled down 16 rebounds for Chicago, which is an NBA-best 30-3.

Sharon Wright scored 22 points, Clarence Weatherspoon added 20 and Stackhouse was held to 13 on 4-of-11 shooting.

"If anyone says I said anything towards Michael Jordan, or this game tonight, they are a bold-faced liar," Stackhouse said of his fellow North Carolina alumnus.

"I am not afraid of Jordan. But somebody in Chicago said that I said I could beat him. I didn't. I wouldn't mind getting ahold of the person quoting me as saying that."

But he admitted saying he felt he had "made an easy transition into the league."

"I felt it has been pretty easy from the way I always did things in college."

Stackhouse added: "He hit more shots than I took. Hopefully he'll cool down by Tuesday." That's when the teams meet in Chicago.

"Jerry learned a lesson on just how much work it takes to beat someone like that," Sixers coach John Lucas said.

In San Antonio, Vinny Del Negro scored a season-high 30 points and Doc Rivers partially blocked a shot by Penny Hardaway at the buzzer as the Spurs held off the undermanned Orlando Magic 106-105.

David Robinson added 27 points for the Spurs, who have won four straight and are 7-1 at home against Orlando.

Hardaway scored 35 points and Dennis Scott added 27 for the Magic, who played without centre Shaquille O'Neal and forward Horace Grant.

In New York, Mitch Richmond scored 18 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter as the Sacramento Kings scored their first road win over the Knicks in 14 games and 15 years, 119-111.

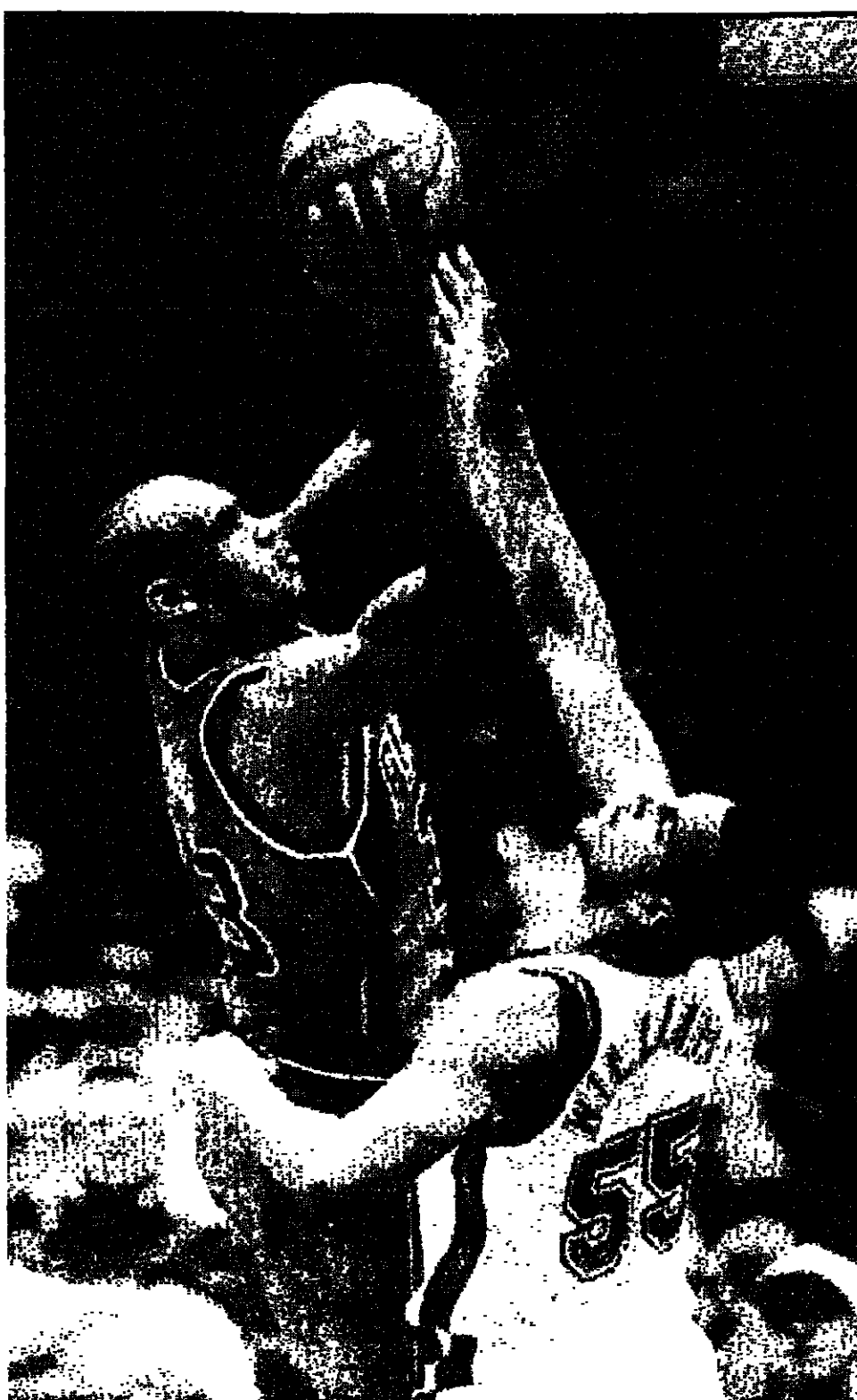
The Kings snapped a six-game road losing streak and won at New York for the first time since November 1981, when the franchise was in Kansas City.

Patrick Ewing scored 29 for New York, which lost for the third time in five home games.

In Atlanta, Steve Smith scored 27 and Mookie Blaylock 20 as the Hawks built a 20-point third-quarter lead and held off a furious late rally to defeat the Boston Celtics 108-105.

Dino Radja led with 19 points, Guard Dana Barros, who had his NBA record three-point streak snapped Friday against New York, was held scoreless in 17 minutes.

In Dallas, Larry Johnson scored 20 points and Dell Curry 18 as the Charlotte



Detroit Pistons forward Grant Hill tries to shoot past New Jersey Nets forward Jayson Williams (right) in the first period of their NBA game January 13 at the Meadowlands Arena in East Rutherford, New Jersey (Reuters photo)

Hornets routed the Mavericks 103-83.

Matt Geiger pulled down a career-high 17 rebounds for Charlotte.

Jason Kidd registered his second triple-double in as many nights with 13 points, 11 assists and 10 rebounds for Dallas.

In Denver, Rod Strickland scored 26 points and Arvydas Sabonis 22 as the Portland Trail Blazers held off a late run by the Nuggets for a 118-117 victory.

Portland won for the fifth time in six games despite almost blowing a 22-point third-quarter lead.

Dale Ellis scored 26 points for Denver, which had its three-game winning streak snapped.

At Indiana, Reggie Miller scored 26 points as the Pacers opened a big lead and held on for their sixth victory in seven games, 103-94 over the Minnesota Timberwolves.

Christian Laettner and Tom Gugliotta scored 20 points apiece for the Timberwolves, who have lost five straight.

At New Jersey, Grant Hill's fifth career triple-double — 26 points, 13 rebounds and 13 assists — led the Detroit Pistons to their third straight victory, 91-80 over the Nets.

In Toronto, rookie Damon Stoudamire scored a season-high 29 points and Oliver Miller added 21 as the Raptors beat the Washington Bullets 106-100, ending a five-game losing streak.

In Vancouver, Greg Anthony scored 21 points as the Grizzlies rallied from a nine-point halftime deficit to defeat the Miami Heat 69-65, snapping a four-game losing streak for just their seventh victory of the season.

Miami lost its fourth straight.

In Los Angeles, Clyde Drexler scored 16 of his 32 points in the fourth quarter and Hakeem Olajuwon added 29 points and 17 rebounds as the Houston Rockets beat the Clippers 115-104.

STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Orlando	27	8	.771	-
New York	22	12	.647	4½
Washington	18	17	.514	9
Miami	16	18	.471	10½
Boston	14	21	.400	13
New Jersey	13	21	.382	13½
Philadelphia	7	26	.212	19

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Chicago	30	3	.909	-
Indiana	21	13	.618	9½
Cleveland	18	15	.545	12
Detroit	18	15	.545	12
Atlanta	17	17	.500	13½
Charlotte	17	18	.486	14
Milwaukee	12	22	.353	18½
Toronto	10	25	.286	21

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
San Antonio	24	9	.727	-
Houston	25	11	.694	½
Utah	22	12	.647	2½
Denver	16	20	.444	9½
Dallas	10	24	.294	14½
Minnesota	8	26	.235	16½
Vancouver	7	29	.194	18½

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	Gb
Seattle	24	10	.706	-
Sacramento	20	12	.625	3
LA Lakers	19	17	.528	6
Portland	17	18	.486	7½
Golden State	16	19	.457	8½
Phoenix	14	18	.438	9
LA Clippers	15	21	.417	10

RESULTS

Indiana 103	Minnesota 94
Toronto 106	Washington 100
Atlanta 108	Boston 105
Detroit 91	New Jersey 80
Sacramento 119	New York 111
Chicago 120	Philadelphia 93
Charlotte 103	Dallas 83
San Antonio 106	Orlando 105
Portland 118	Denver 117
Vancouver 69	Miami 65
Houston 115	LA Clippers 104

Sampras and Seles chase record rewards

MELBOURNE (AFP) — The Australian Open gets underway Monday with record prize money and a brand new stadium to fit in the ever increasing number of fans.

The opening Grand Slam of 1996 sees Pete Sampras as favourite for the men's title and Monica Seles an even hotter bet for the women's title.

Yet both have injury worries.

Sampras, recovering from a virus which delayed his arrival and forced him to miss the warm-up Colonial Classic, starts on Tuesday against Australian Richard Fromberg.

The world number one was beaten in last year's final by Andre Agassi. But even Agassi, now with his head clean shaven, cannot see anyone but himself and his friend and rival reaching the final.

"I don't think I see anybody out there on Pete's level, rights now," commented Agassi.

"If we're both desiring it and we're both working hard then I feel that he's the guy I have to worry about."

Agassi also made a little fun of playing Argentinian qualifier Gaston Etis in the first round.

"I won't complain about that," Agassi grinned. "Qualifiers have a nice little knack of getting nervous."

The brash American is also working his way back to full fitness after a chest muscle injury kept him on the sidelines from September's U.S. Open, forcing him out of the end-season Davis Cup final, Grand Slam Cup and World Tour Championship.

And right behind Sampras and Agassi, Thomas Muster is looming and he would overtake them in the world rankings after the tournament.

Muster is 368 points behind Sampras and 291 behind Agassi. Under the top-14 performances over a 12-month period rankings system, the 28-year-old Austrian left-hander can discard his third round defeat to Dutchman Jacco Eltingh at last year's Australian Open, while Agassi has 686 points on the line from the '95 triumph and Sampras is de-

fending 486.

The pressure will be on Sampras and Agassi to repeat their summit clash to stave off Muster, who won 12 titles last year.

With Steffi Graf still recovering from a foot injury, co-world number Seles has an open path to her first Grand Slam title since being stabbed by a Graf fan at a Hamburg tournament in April 1993.

Australian bookmakers had Seles at 1-2 on to win the title. But that was before she was given a fight by Lindsay Davenport in the final of the Sydney International on Sunday.

The Yugoslav-born American battled with a groin strain to win Sunday's final 4-6, 7-7 (9/7), 6-3 and she said it was her toughest match since the attack which forced her out of competitive tennis for more than two years.

"My serve was not good today and I gave her a lot of easy shots and of course she takes those chances," said Seles, ranked co-number one. "You can't do that against a player like Lind-

say."

"I didn't come in with the best attitude to the match and I was very mad about that," she said, vowing to leave off-court troubles behind her in future.

Davenport said the narrow score would encourage others in the Australian Open, particularly Gabriela Sabatini, Arantxa Sanchez Vicario and Martina Hingis.

But Seles, who has never been beaten in Australia, let alone the Australian Open, said the injury would not be bothering her in Melbourne.

This year, there will be record prize money of \$6.35 million. The organisers have also spent around \$17.5 million on extending the Flinders Park complex so it has two extra show courts, with a capacity of 3,000 and 1,100 respectively. There are also eight new outside courts.

The Australian Open is virtually guaranteed to live up to its reputation for sizzling temperatures. On the final practice day, the thermometer hit 39 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Manchester United miss their chance

LONDON (AFP) — Manchester United missed their chance to make up three points on Premiership leaders Newcastle United on Saturday after being held to a goalless draw with Aston Villa at Old Trafford.

United, hoping for a win that would bring them to within four points of Newcastle, who play at Coventry on Sunday, were left to rue three misses by their lacklustre frontman Andy Cole.

Third-placed Liverpool did no better, needing a late equaliser from substitute Ian Rush to avoid being upset by Sheffield Wednesday at Hillsborough.

Serbian striker Darko Kovacevic's third in three Premiership games since his 2.5 million pound move from Red Star Belgrade had Wednesday in front after just seven minutes.

But veteran Rush struck three minutes from time to save the title chase.

Some Brazilian magic from Middlesbrough playmaker Juninho failed to stop Arsenal at the Riverside stadium, as Boro squandered a 2-1 lead to go down 3-2 to the Londoners.

Paul Merson put Arsenal in front after seven minutes, chipping over advancing keeper Gary Walsh after Danish midfielder John Jensen had threaded the ball through.

But Juninho levelled before the break from point-blank range, his second for his new club, and then sent a delightful ball for Philip Stamp to run onto and score Boro's second after the restart.

But the lead had lasted only three minutes, when Merson's free-kick was headed against the woodwork by Ian Wright and David Platt followed up for the equaliser.

Dutchman Glenn Helder made it 3-2 for the Gunners after 62 minutes and Boro also had the ignominy of seeing Alan Moore dismissed in the final minutes for foul play.

Swedish signing Tomas Brolin guided 10-man Leeds United to a 2-0 victory over West Ham at Elland Road, with Lee Chapman being both hero and villain for the home side.

Chapman, back at his former club on loan from Ipswich, set up Brolin's 25th minute header, but got himself sent off barely a minute later for elbowing West Ham's Danish defender Marc Rieper.

Brolin added Leeds' second after 63 minutes, his fourth since his 4.5 million pound move from Parma in late November.

Another 10-man team, Chelsea, held Everton to a 1-1 draw at Goodison Park.

Seles wins Sydney International final

SYDNEY (R) — Joint world number one Monica Seles won her second tournament since her return to tennis last August when she defeated fellow American Lindsay Davenport in a gruelling three-set final at the Peters International Championship in Sydney on Sunday.

Seles saved a match point in the second set tie breaker and also overcame a groin injury to defeat fourth seed Davenport 4-6, 7-6 (9/7), 6-3 in a draining 134-minute final.

The match proved beyond doubt that Seles is returning to the form that saw her dominate women's tennis before she was stabbed by an obsessed Steffi Graf fan at a tournament in Hamburg in April, 1993.

The Yugoslav-born American called for treatment from a Women's Tennis Association (WTA) trainer after the seventh game of the second set and had her right thigh heavily strapped during an allowable three-minute injury break.

The injury caused Seles the most concern while she was serving but she stressed she would still be able to play in the Australian Open starting in Melbourne on Monday.

"I immediately got some ice on it after the final and did some stretching but it was bugging me a lot on my serve," Seles said.

"I'll get on the flight to Melbourne tonight and have some more treatment there. Hopefully it will be all right with one day off and the trainer said it should be okay," she said.

Seles has now won two of the three tournaments she has played since the stabbing incident, winning the Canadian Open last August and then losing to Graf in a three-set U.S. Open final last September.

Seles said the match was the hardest she had had since



World co-number one Monica Seles of the U.S. salutes the crowd after beating compatriot Lindsay Davenport in the women's singles final of the Sydney International Tennis Open tournament (Reuters photo)

her return to tennis last year and also rated it one of the toughest of her career.

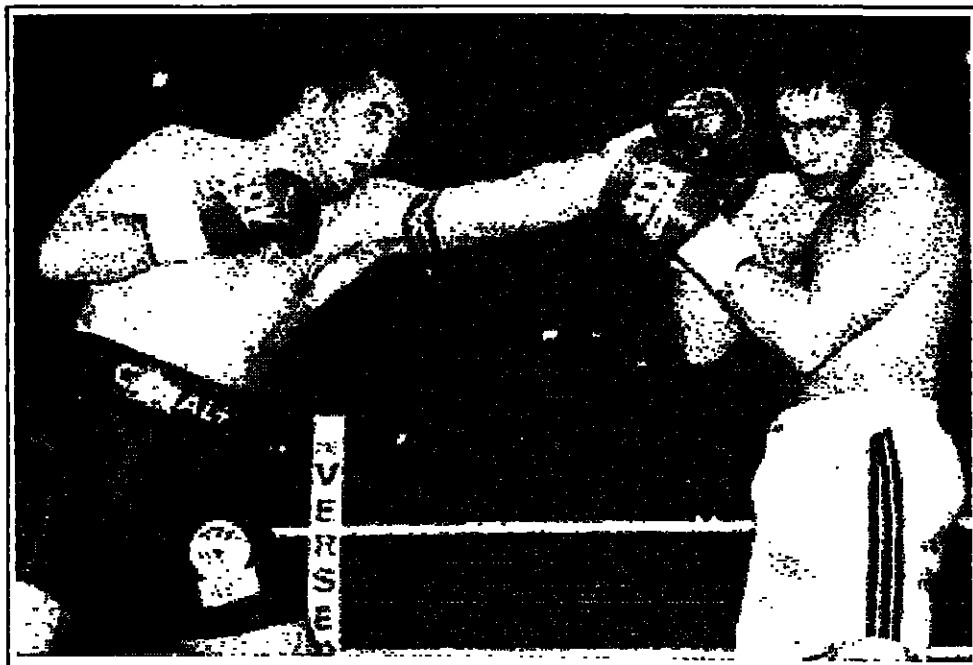
"Whoever won today was just pure luck. At that match point I was thinking if she wins, then she's just the better player on the day," Seles said.

Davenport served for the match at 5-4 in the second set after breaking Seles' serve in the ninth game, only to drop her own serve to love in the

10th game.

Ranked 12th in the world, Davenport then had match point at 6-5 in the tie breaker only to see Seles smash an ambitious forehand winner.

Both players dropped serve in the first two games of the third set. With Seles' greater determination proving the difference as she broke Davenport's serve again in the fifth and ninth games of the set.



Frenchman Fabrice Tiozzo (left) lands a punch weight contest in St. Etienne on Saturday, on Canadian boxer Eric Lucas during their World Boxing Council (WBC) light-heavy title bout (Reuters photo)

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* ACE VENTURA "2"
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CONCORD "2"
* Batman Forever
Shows: 3:30
* DISCLOSURE
Shows: 5:30

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سكنيا من اجل

Hrovat beats Eder to win Garmisch slalom

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany (Agencies) — Slovenia's Urška Hrovat held off challenges from Austrian World Cup leader Eder and unheralded Italian Roberta Serra to win her first slalom of the season on Sunday.

Hrovat, 21, who had recorded two second places in World Cup slaloms this season, skied the two legs of the Garmisch course in one minute 19.83 seconds, ahead of Eder in 1:20.01 and Serra in 1:20.38.

"I had to wait a long time for this, I had some bad luck and was sick for a long time but now I'm really satisfied," Hrovat said.

The biggest surprise of the day was Serra, who had never before finished higher than eighth.

Serra lay 15th after the first leg, 1.38 seconds behind Hrovat. Starting first in the second leg, she put in a storming time of 39.56 seconds which nobody could match.

Eder overtook Serra on aggregate with a second run of 39.89 before Hrovat, often the victim of second-led nerves, did enough to win by completing the course in 40.39.

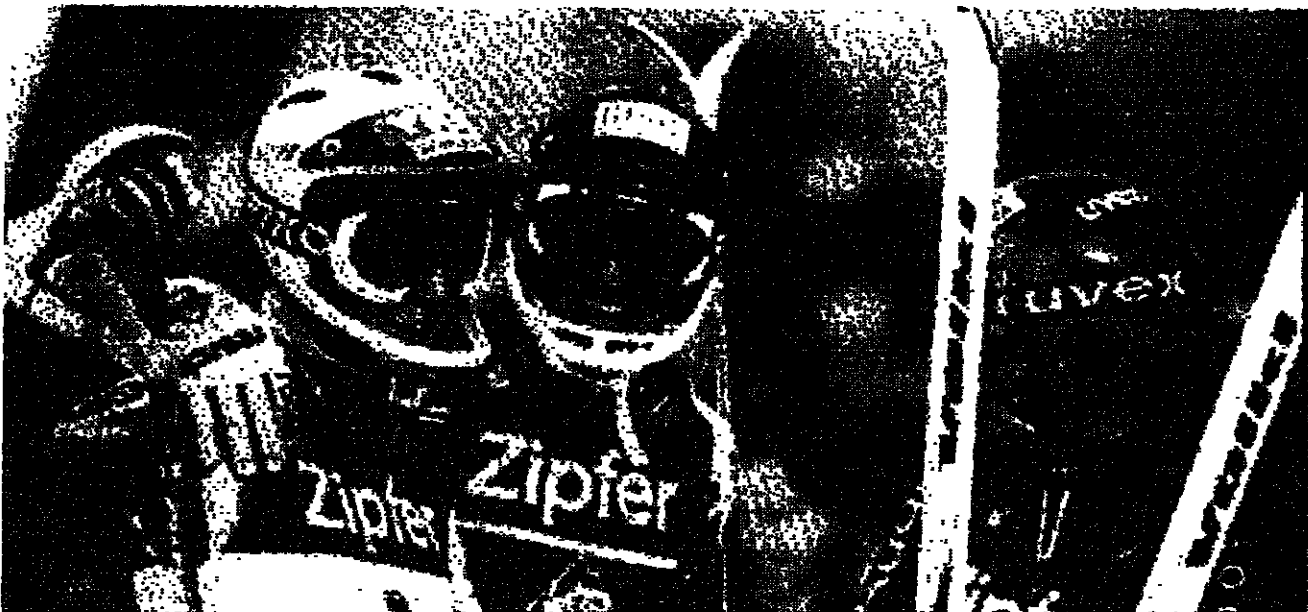
The result propelled Hrovat from fifth to second place in the World Cup slalom standings with 332 points, still far adrift of Eder who has won three times this season and has 520.

Sykora ends Tomba's run

In Kitzbühel, Austria, Alberto Tomba's winning run in this year's World Cup slalom was dramatically ended here Sunday by Austria's Thomas Sykora, who just edged out the Italian to win in front of his home crowd. Sykora timed 1:34.24min to hold off Tomba by just six hundredths of a second and score his first World Cup slalom victory. Jure Kosier of Slovenia was third, crossing the line in



Martina Ertl of Germany pushes a pole out of her way to take the 3rd best time in the first run of the women's special slalom race in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, January 14 (Reuters photo)



Urška Hrovat of Slovenia (left) receives congratulations from second placed Eder of Austria and Germany's third placed Martina Ertl (right) after winning the women's special slalom race in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, January 14 (Reuters photo)

1:34.46min.

Tomba appeared to have done enough with a strong second run after his first left him with just four hundredths to make up, but Sykora kept his nerve with a superb second run to prevent "La Bomba" making it four wins on the trot.

Sebastien Amiez of France just missed out on the podium, finishing in 1:34.88 after living dangerously on the bottom half of the course, which rutted up badly as the race progressed.

The Frenchman continued his record of always making the top five this season. Austria's Mario Reiter of Austria placed fifth with a time of 1:35.75, ahead of Christian Mayer and Olympic champion Thomas Stangassinger, both of Austria.

Michael Von Gruenigen of Switzerland, eighth after the first run, crashed out on an awkward turn in the top half of the second run. Japan's Kiminobu Kimura scored his best result of the season, taking eighth spot.

African Nations Cup

Zambia, Algeria in goalless draw

BLOEMFONTEIN, South Africa (AFP) — Zambia and Algeria played out a goalless draw to forget here on Sunday — a vivid contrast to Saturday's exciting opening match in this African Nations Cup.

While South Africa had a euphoric 3-0 win over Cameroon to the delight of 60,000 supporters in Johannesburg on Saturday, only 6,000 showed up at the 38,000-capacity Free State Stadium for this opening Group B match.

In an open but scrappy game, Zambia could not convert their second-half superiority into goals.

Both sides had a great chance to score before the break.

Algeria's Khaled Lounici hit the crossbar in the 10th minute with a spectacular volley which bounced down onto the goal line before the ball was scrambled away.

With the match swinging from end to end, Johnson Bwalya raced down the left and unleashed a shot which beat Algerian keeper M'Hamed Haniched but hit the right-hand upright.

Algeria's Billet Dziri broke through twice in the last few minutes of the half. But he chipped over the bar on the

first occasion and Zambia keeper James Phiri saved the second.

In the second half, Kaci Said fell awkwardly and injured his hamstring. Though he played on for a few minutes, he was eventually substituted by Ali Mecabih.

The players began to tire during the second half and the quality of the game suffered as a result, bringing little pattern to moves by either side.

Algeria's Lounici had a header saved on the line later on, and Johnson Bwalya skied a left foot shot after being fed by Kalusha Bwalya.

Bangladeshi children call for ending camel race

DHAKA (R) — Four children protesting against the use of Bangladeshi boys as jockeys in Gulf camel races asked the government on Sunday to begin diplomatic efforts to halt the often dangerous sport, their lawyers said.

The children asked in a legal notice served on the foreign ministry and three other government departments to know by January 21 what steps the government was taking, the Bangladesh Environmental Lawyers Association (BELA) said in a statement.

The children wanted the government to ensure that no more children were smuggled out of Bangladesh and no camel racing took place in future using Bangladeshi children as riders.

They also asked the government to take measures to bring back children who had already been smuggled to the region, especially the United Arab Emirates.

"If no satisfactory response is received... by January 21, the children, in their appropriate

capacities, would initiate legal action against the government," the statement said.

Police said the Dhaka government was aware that Bangladeshi children were regularly smuggled to the Middle East, particularly UAE, where they have a growing demand as jockeys.

"But the unfortunate trade has never stopped because child traffickers mislead poor parents by false promises of lucrative jobs for their children," one police officer said.

"The parents hardly ask what job they can offer to children as young as seven years because of their all-encompassing poverty," he said.

The BELA statement on Sunday minor jockeys were usually tied on the camels' back and made to scream to provoke their mounts into running faster.

The children were often poorly fed to keep their weight down, it added.

Orioli, Lartigue win Dakar '96 rally

DAKAR (AFP) — Italy's Edi Orioli on a Yamaha and the French tandem of Pierre Lartigue and Michel Perin of Citroen won the 1996 Granada-Dakar rally Sunday, with Orioli picking up his fourth victory to date.

Lartigue and Perin celebrated their second triumph in the cars section, having also won in 1994.

Old hand Orioli won back in 1988 with Honda, as well as in 1990 and 94 with Cagiva.

The final stage honours for the 472-kilometre trek from Tambacounda to Dakar went to Finland's Ari Vatanen and co-driver Gilles Picard.

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TRANSFER THE THREAT

North-South vulnerable. East

deals.

NORTH
♠ A K Q 4
♥ 9 8 7 3 2
♦ A 6 4
♣ 4 4

WEST
♠ 5
♥ 6
♦ 7 3 2
♣ K Q J 10 7 3 2

EAST
♠ J 10 9 8 7
♥ Void
♦ J 9 8 5
♣ 9 8 6 5

SOUTH
♠ 6 3 2
♥ A K Q J 10 5 4
♦ Q 10
♣ A

The bidding:

Opening lead: King of ♠

A transfer squeeze is a rare animal indeed, usually found in double dummy problems. This one occurred during a team match at the World Olympiad in Albuquerque.

North's bid of four no trump in this competitive auction was key-card Blackwood. Since North held nothing in hearts, the minimum that player could have to look for was ace-king of spades or diamonds and ace in the other suit, so

South was not selling out to any opposition contract. Seven hearts became the contract at both tables. At one table declarer crashed the ace of diamonds early in the hope that the long spades and king of diamonds were in the same hand, in which case that player would be squeezed on the run of the hearts. Unfortunately that was not the case — down one.

Sitting South at the other table was Gerald Caravelli of Des Plaines, Ill. He decided that West's failure to sacrifice at seven clubs was based on some hope of defense, and that could only be the king of diamonds. So after winning the ace of clubs at trick one, declarer drew trumps in one round, then led the queen of diamonds, intending to run it if West played low.

When West covered, declarer took the ace and cashed out the heart suit, coming down to four spades in dummy and three spades and the ten of diamonds in hand. East could not keep four spades and the jack of diamonds, and whatever card he elected to discard gave declarer the fulfilling trick.

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Those interested please call at the Language Centre for registration or further information.

Registration begins on Saturday, January 21, 1996.



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Managing Director

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Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (150) for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Saturday March. 2nd, 1996.

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Managing Director

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Bahrain slams Qatar TV interview with opposition

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain said on Sunday that a television interview by Qatar with exiled Bahraini Muslim Shi'ite opposition leaders was "baffling" and one official said it was an attack on a fellow GCC Cooperation Council (GCC) member.

Bahrain Information Minister Mohammad Ibrahim Al Mutawae said Saturday's Qatar broadcast... "is baffling and a surprise. Bahrain is currently studying this issue in its entirety."

An official said Bahrain regarded the move as an attack by Qatar, a fellow GCC member.

"This is a clear attack on a fellow GCC country, interference in its internal affairs and providing a platform for opponents to attack," one official source said.

Qatar television, which is easily received in nearby Bahrain, interviewed Sheikh Ali Salman and Mansoor Al Jamri, son of Muslim Shi'ite cleric opposition leader Sheikh Abdul Amir Al Jamri, in London.

Qatari newspapers on Sunday quoted them during the 90-minute interview denying any links with foreign groups. "They also attacked the (Bahraini) government for killing the opposition, torturing them and violating mosques," said the newspapers.

Anti-government unrest broke in Bahrain in December 1994 after Sheikh Salman was arrested for distributing leaflets calling for restoration

of parliament. He was later deported.

Bahrain said it planned to broaden its appointed consultative council to take into account wider representation.

"We denounce the security forces' activities against opposition leaders and the people and we demand a commission of inquiry to determine who is to blame for these practices," Sheikh Salman said in the broadcast.

These practices include "torture, unlawful entry into homes and prayer sites," added Sheikh Ali.

The interviews were aired while Bahrain on Saturday summoned the opposition to stop using the mosques to "spread subversion and harm the country's security."

Opposition leader arrested

In another development, Shi'ite opposition leader Sheikh Abdel Wahab Hussein was arrested in Bahrain on Sunday as the authorities attempted to clamp down on a wave of unrest in the Gulf state, his family and supporters said.

Sheikh Hussein, 45, was arrested at his home at Nuweidra, south of Manama, his family told AFP by telephone.

Opposition leaders confirmed the arrest of Sheikh Hussein, who was one of eight Shi'ite dignitaries hauled into the interior ministry on Saturday and warned to stop using mosques to "spread subversion and threaten state security."

Editor Rimawi appears in court today

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Fahed Rimawi, the chief editor of Al Majd weekly, will appear today before the criminal court accused of publishing writings that harm Jordan's relations with another country.

It will be the first time that a Jordanian journalist is tried before a criminal court.

The charge against Mr. Rimawi was motivated by an article published in Al Majd last February by the exiled Bahraini leader of the Popular Committee, Abdul Rahman Nueimi, which calls for the removal of the chief of security in Bahrain, Ian Henderson, a Briton. The article compared Mr. Henderson with "Glubb pasha," John Bagot Glubb, the British commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces in the 1950s who was expelled by His Majesty King Hussein in 1956.

Mr. Rimawi's case is based on a law that dates

back to the 1960s and that has never been applied against journalists and writers. It found guilty, Mr. Rimawi would face a minimum of five years in prison.

"This article (in the penal code) does not fit the democratic era," said leading columnist Fahed Fanek in an article recently published in Al Bilad newspaper. "It has been frozen and has never been used even during the martial law era, why reactivate it now?"

In a reply published in the same newspaper a week later, Mohammad Amin, head of the Press and Publications Department called on Mr. Fanek to thank the government for its tolerance instead of lashing out at it.

"If our government was tolerant, and it had been the case for some time, we could not force others to be tolerant as well. The law had given them the right to litigate and to defend their rights," said Mr. Amin in his reply.

Without naming Mr.

Rimawi's paper or his article, Mr. Amin said that at the time the item appeared in Al Majd, a delegation from Bahrain arrived in Amman "to negotiate on an agreement to employ 1,500 Jordanians in their country in the fields of information and education... (however) when the delegation read the article, the deal was dropped and we lost the chances of employment at a time when we are suffering from unemployment."

"Don't we know how to write and criticize... can't we have freedom of expression without accusing others of dependency, oppression or harming them by infringing on their private lives?" he asked.

"This is not freedom. We are in a civilised country that respects the law, and if we lost the right to litigate what else do we have and why does (Dr. Fanek) insist that the government should not resort to court as a final arbiter?"

In another article pub-

lished in the weekly Shi'ite newspaper, Dr. Fanek criticised Mr. Amin's stand and said that Arab neighbouring countries should tolerate freedom of expression in Jordan just as they do when similar articles appear in European and American publications.

"If this continues then it means the end of the freedom of the press in Jordan, a basic pillar of democracy," Dr. Fanek said.

According to Mr. Rimawi, four other cases are filed against Al Majd — a Nasserite-leaning newspaper. But all of them are based on violations of the Press and Publications Law. This, however, is based on Article 118 of the 1960 penal code which states that "Any person who through acts, writings or speeches... not approved by the government... that harm the Kingdom's relations with another state is punishable by no less than five years imprisonment."



Yitzhak Rabin's confessed assassin Yigal Amir (R), his brother Hagai (3rd L) and Dror Adani (L) sit flanked by policemen in a Tel Aviv courtroom Sunday, where they were formally charged with conspiring to murder the prime minister. (Reuters photo)

Three Israelis charged with plot to murder Rabin

TEL AVIV (R) — Yitzhak Rabin's confessed assassin Yigal Amir and two other Israelis were formally charged on Sunday in a Tel Aviv court with conspiring to murder the prime minister.

Judges gave the three suspects, all of them religious Jews in their 20s, until Feb. 26 to enter a plea after their attorneys said they were unprepared to respond to the indictment.

Yigal Amir will go on trial alone for the murder in a separate proceeding starting Jan. 23. According to the conspiracy indictment, Yigal's brother Hagai Amir and Dror Adani helped him plot the assassination over many months.

Judges agreed to postpone most of the hearings in the conspiracy trial until April to allow for the completion of Yigal Amir's murder trial.

Yigal Amir has admitted in courtroom appearances to gunning down Mr. Rabin after a Tel Aviv rally Nov. 4 because Mr. Amir said he opposed government peace moves.

At least two of them — Hagai Amir and Dror Adani — are expected to plead in-

nocent, even though prosecutors said Hagai Amir made hollow-point bullets he hoped would increase accuracy and cause more harm to Mr. Rabin when fired by his brother.

"According to all the information, the man who alone initiated, planned and carried out the murder of the prime minister is Yigal Amir and he shared his decision with no one," said Moshe Meroz, attorney for Hagai Amir.

At remand hearings since the murder, prosecutors have quoted both Hagai Amir and Adani as admitting during police interrogations to helping plan the killing.

But Mr. Meroz said at a remand hearing on Sunday that Hagai Amir never took seriously his brother's intent to kill Mr. Rabin and gave a false confession in solidarity with his brother.

"Yigal expressed his ideas to many people. If the prosecution wanted to pin criminal intent on all those who listened, it would have to drag many people into court," Mr. Meroz said. The attorney described in

court how interrogators placed Yigal and Hagai Amir in one room for a confrontation during which Hagai "admitted" for the first time he helped plan the murder, Mr. Meroz said that confession was false.

The Amir brothers and Mr. Adani are also being charged with conspiracy to harm Palestinians and various weapons violations.

The three suspects chatted with lawyers and smiled at family and friends during their hearing. The judges ordered all three jailed until the end of the trial.

Mr. Adani's lawyer, Tzion Amir, said his client asked rabbis for a religious ruling which would permit the murder of Mr. Rabin because of the handing over to West Bank land to Palestinians that was the biblical land of Israel. They turned him down.

"The rabbis told him even if religiously it was warranted, they would not give him permission because the murder was liable to lead to civil war. At that point he backed out of the plan, long before the killing," the lawyer said in court.



3rd S. Korean pop star attempts suicide

SEOUL (AFP) — Rap singer Rhee Sang-Minh was in hospital recovering from a slashed wrist Sunday, the third South Korean pop idol to attempt suicide here in the past two weeks. Doctors told reporters that Rhee, 20, the lead singer of the Roo-Kah Group, was in stable condition after the suicide attempt Thursday when he slashed his wrist after critics accused him of plagiarising a Japanese song for his latest album. The attempt came in the wake of the suicides of popular singers So Chi-Won, 19 and Kim Kwang-Sok, 32, one by a sedative overdose and the other by hanging, so on New Year's Day and Kim five days later. In the wake of the double deaths, a disconsolate young female fan also committed suicide.

Cuba to start clinical trials of cholera vaccine

HAVANA (R) — Cuba will soon start clinical trials of a vaccine against cholera, the head of the National Centre for Scientific Investigations (CNIC) said. CNIC Director Carlos Gutierrez was quoted by the Cuban news agency Prensa Latina as saying that once authorities had given the go-ahead, everything was ready to start the trials. He did not indicate how soon this would be. Cuba has invested heavily in its scientific research and has produced in recent years, for example, a vaccine against meningitis that has found a market in several Latin American countries.

Cut calories and live longer — scientists

LONDON (R) — Drastic reductions in calorie intake could help us to live longer, according to a British expert on ageing. Scientists were able to extend the lifespan of rodents in a laboratory experiment by as much as 42 per cent by restricting their feeding. "We have been able to take a rat which should live for about three years and see it live for around 4.5," Dr. Brian Merry of the Institute of Human Ageing at the University of Liverpool told the Sunday Times. The rats were deprived of as much as 70 per cent of their normal calorie intake, but they were fed a nutritious diet and did not suffer starvation. The paper said 60 volunteers have now embarked on international human trials and the U.S. government is expected to give the go-ahead for the first American trials for 120 men and women later this year. "If we can understand why restriction delays the onset of ageing, this would be a major breakthrough," Dr. Merry told the paper.

Killer dogs get stay of execution

PERTH, Australia (AFP) — Four killer dogs which savaged a woman to death got a stay of execution here only hours before they were to be put down. The dogs — three Rottweilers and a German shepherd cross — were ordered destroyed by a magistrate after a fatal attack in June on 85-year-old Perina Chokolic as she worked in her garden. He also ordered the dogs' owner Giovanni Pacino to pay 6,000 Australian dollars (\$5,100) in fines and costs for failing to take all reasonable precautions to prevent a dog attack. The Perth Supreme Court granted Mr. Pacino leave to appeal against his conviction and the order to destroy the dogs.

France tries to beat Britain in missile sales to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — France and Britain are in close competition to sell missiles for Kuwait's French-made patrol boats, officials said Sunday.

French Defence Minister Charles Millon was due here Sunday, following a visit Saturday by British Defence Secretary Michael Portillo who urged Kuwait to buy British Aerospace's Sea Skua missiles to equip eight P-37 boats.

The boats were purchased from France in March last year.

Mr. Millon is to try to persuade Kuwaiti leaders to buy MM-15 sea-to-sea missiles produced by Aerospatiale, French officials said. Construction began in June for the boat contract worth 2.4 billion francs (\$480 million).

Kuwait's defence minister, Sheikh Ahmad Al Hamoud Al Sabah, said during a press conference with Mr. Portillo that his country had not yet made its decision.

Ciller proposes early election — newspaper

ANKARA (AFP) — Caretaker Turkish Premier Tansu Ciller wants to run with rival conservatives on a joint ticket in fresh legislative elections to break the political deadlock after inconclusive polls last month, a newspaper said Sunday.

The Istanbul-based Milliyet said Ms. Ciller outlined the plan for an electoral pact between her True Path and the Motherland Party to several leading businessmen she met in Istanbul late Saturday.

The pro-Islamic Welfare Party topped the poll but although its leader Necmettin Erbakan was appointed prime minister-designate last week, he has to-date failed to forge a majority.

Milliyet quoted Ms. Ciller as saying no group would succeed in creating a stable government based on the current legislature.

The French and British missiles were "the best in the world," Sheikh Ahmad said, adding that Mr. Portillo's and Mr. Millon's visits "will give us more detail about the whole set."

British helicopters firing Sea Skua missiles sunk 15 Iraqi boats during the 1991 Gulf War, Mr. Portillo said. "We are offering this system to Kuwait, and we aim to offer good value for money. I think we do offer extremely good value for money."

Sheikh Ahmad told reporters here that Kuwait had earmarked more than 300 million dinars (\$960 million) for defence this year, with priority for naval and ground forces.

But Kuwait was trying to slow down defence purchases because it has acquired its major weapons systems and must aim to cut the budget deficit, he said. "We have to stand by this budget. So we have to go slowly, but surely."

"What we should do is to hold a new election in which my True Path will run in an alliance with the Motherland Party, in this way we can manage to have a majority in parliament," Milliyet quoted Ms. Ciller as saying.

Welfare garnered 158 seats in the Dec. 24 poll, well short of an absolute majority in the 550-seat parliament. True Path and the Motherland Party won 135 and 132 seats respectively.

Welfare's overtures received a firm "no" from Ms. Ciller Thursday and Motherland leader Mesut Yilmaz told Mr. Erbakan Saturday that he would first try to secure an alliance with True Path.

However, Mr. Yilmaz insisted that Ms. Ciller, prime minister since June 1993, could not keep the post in a Motherland-True Path coalition.

Efforts intensify to shore up Muslim-Croat pact

SARAJEVO (R) — Diplomatic efforts intensified on Sunday to shore up the crumbling Muslim-Croat alliance at the heart of the Bosnian peace, while international pressure won the release of three men held by Serbs in Sarajevo.

Both the commander of NATO forces in the country, U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith, and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel visited the divided southern Bosnian city of Mostar.

Mr. Kinkel indicated that Germany would not compromise on reunifying Mostar, the scene of a series of tit-for-tat ethnic killings between Croats and Muslims since the new year.

"The (Muslim-Croat) federation must work. Mostar must be a single city," he told

a news conference. "The European Union is determined that the Dayton agreement be implemented to the last comma."

To underline his commitment to a united Mostar, Mr. Kinkel walked over a footbridge into Muslim east of the city. The EU built it to replace a 16th century Ottoman bridge, once one of the former Yugoslav's top tourist attractions, which Croat artillery destroyed during the 1993 war.

Like Mr. Clinton on Saturday, Adm. Smith lent his voice to efforts to douse the ethnic conflict there but was careful not to commit the NATO-led Force Implementation Force (IFOR) to a big role in the dispute.

He and Mostar's EU administrator Hans Koschnick re-

jected a Muslim appeal for IFOR to patrol the entire city, stressing it was a job for civilian police.

"Peace in the Balkans is a problem for IFOR, peace in the city is my duty," Mr. Koschnick said.

The Muslim-Croat federation, formed two years ago in a U.S.-brokered deal to end a Muslim-Croat war in 1993, has also been threatened by confrontations over territory between the two sides' armies in northern Bosnia in recent days.

NATO spokesman Colonel Mark Rayner said in Sarajevo on Sunday the tension near Doboj in northern Bosnia had eased after NATO troops got the opposing sides to communicate with each other and withdraw their forces to previous positions.

Israel declares name of Shin Bet chief

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel publicly identified the Shin Bet security chief for the first time in its 48 years on Sunday, facing the fact it couldn't keep his name a secret.

Prime Minister Shimon Peres's office announced that Rear Admiral Ami Ayalon, 50, would take over the Shin Bet. He was Israel's navy commander until his retirement two weeks ago.

Israeli media last week identified Mr. Ayalon as Mr. Peres's choice, saying there was a public interest in identifying the Shin Bet chief even if the organisation had to operate in secret.

Mr. Ayalon takes over a service disgraced by its failure to prevent the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by an Israeli gunman at a Tel Aviv peace rally Nov. 4.

The Shin Bet, set up with the state's founding in 1948, has the twin purposes of fighting secret hostile activity and protecting Israeli leaders.

As a rule, military censors forbid reporters — local and foreign — from disclosing the name of a Shin Bet chief and ban newspapers and television stations from showing his picture.

Major rift appears in Somali alliance

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A major rift emerged Sunday between the Somali Salvation Army (SSA) of self-styled Somali interim President Ali Mahdi and the United Somali Congress (USC/SNA) faction of Osman Hassan Ali "Atto".

The two factions had been allied since June against the USC/SNA faction led by General Mohammed Farah Aided.

However, a key member of the SSA on Sunday accused Mr. Atto of being an undercover agent for Gen. Aided

following recent clan fighting around the southern Somali port of Kismayo in the lower Jubba Valley region.

In a scathing attack, General Aden Abdullah Nur Gabayow, nominal chairman of the Somali Patriotic Movement (SPM), told a press conference here that Mr. Atto's militiamen in lower Jubba were siding militarily with Gen. Aided's self-styled national army in recent fighting.

Gen. Gabayow charged that Mr. Atto's militiamen had been seen fighting alongside

Gen. Aided's forces before they were driven out by Gen. Morgan's militiamen from the villages of Yontoy and Gobwein, as well as in Baidoa.

"Atto is a traitor and will not be accepted by our SSA as a political leader. I always knew that Atto was a deceiving element, but unfortunately our SSA leaders couldn't read between the lines," Gen. Gabayow charged, adding that the SSA had a closed-door meeting on Saturday aimed at isolating him.

Egypt expects tough negotiations with EU

CAIRO (R) — Egypt and the European Union (EU) resume trade negotiations in Brussels on Monday and the head of the Egyptian delegation was quoted on Sunday as saying he expected this round would be the hardest so far.

Assistant foreign minister and chief negotiator Gamal Bayyumi told the government newspaper Al Ahrar the talks would concentrate on the trade in agricultural products, an area in which Egypt is seeking greater access to the European market.

"Egypt cannot agree to its agricultural products being disqualified from competing in the European market and this is the point of the difficult negotiations this time," he said.

"This round is the most difficult round because we are talking about Egypt's agricultural interests... (and) because the European side has an agricultural problem," he added.

On departure on Sunday, he told reporters at Cairo airport that Egypt wanted to increase the value of its agricultural exports to the European Union to \$1 billion a year.

He did not give any indication of the current value of such exports but they are only a fraction of that

amount. The European Union imposes import quotas for a wide range of agricultural products. Egypt has rarely exceeded its quota but disputes will arise in the future if Egyptian farmers start to produce large food surpluses.

One EU official in Cairo said that there was no chance the EU would concede free trade in agriculture.

The negotiators are aiming at a free trade association agreement which would give Egypt 12 years to remove the current tariff barriers to imports of European manufactured goods.

In return the European Union, through grants and technical assistance, would try to help make Egyptian industries more able to withstand European competitive.

After the last round of talks in Brussels in October, a European Commission spokesman said they had made good progress on industrial products but not on agriculture.

"We need to be a bit clearer about Egyptian requests here," the spokesman added. Mr. Bayyumi said the Egyptian negotiators would also do their best to protect the 500,000 Egyptians who work in EU countries.

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